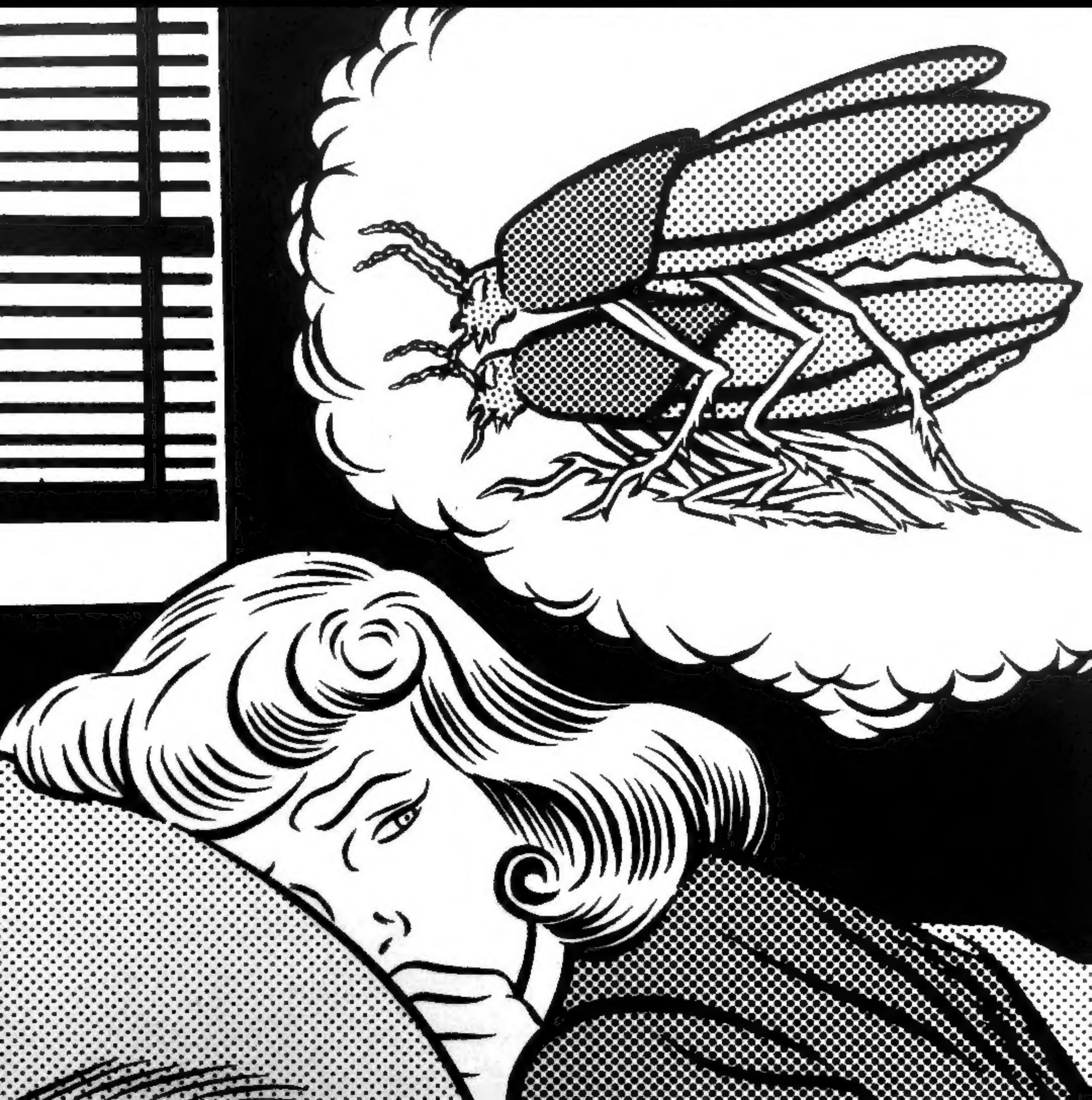


COLLECTED

CHARLES BUANS

COMICS



Campus Crier shorts
Seattle Simpleton one pagers
Cooper Point Journal shorts
Cat Woman Returns
Mutantis one pagers
Mysteries of the Flesh
Love Diary
Voice of Walking Flesh
A Marriage Made In Hell
Ill Bred
Contagious
Dim Bulb
Dog Boy
Mister Blister
Nacked Snack
Oh, Baby
Pixie Meat
Random Access
Various one pagers and incomplete shorts

crypto wander lust comics by charles burns



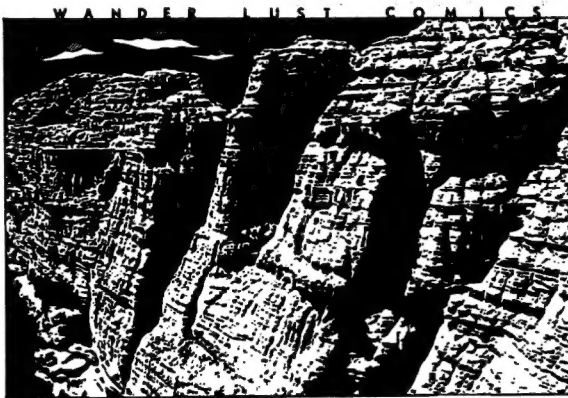
"AS LEE-KAA WATCHES THE STRANGE FLYING OBJECTS, THEY SEEM TO MOVE CLOSER..."



"...UNTIL THEY LAND JUST A FEW YARDS AWAY."

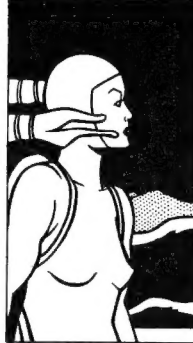


Campus Crier 10-30-1975



Campus Crier 11-6-1975

"LEE-KAA FAILS TO NOTICE A SINISTER LOOKING ROBOT APPROACHING HER FROM THE REAR."

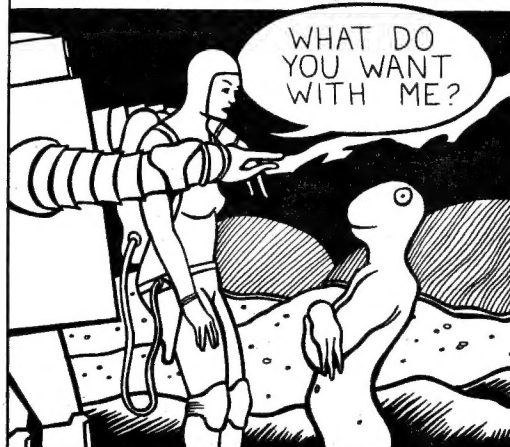


Campus Crier 12-4-1975

"A ROBOT PICKS UP LEE-KAA AND BEGINS TO CARRY HER DOWN THE VALLEY TOWARDS THE SPACE CRAFTS..."



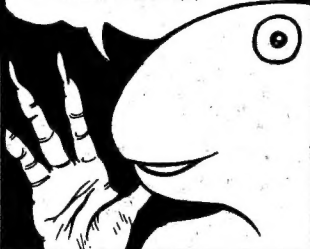
"...THEY STOP IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE CREATURES."



I'LL EXPLAIN: A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, ALL OF THE WOMEN ON OUR PLANET WERE STERILIZED DUE TO EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS OF RADIATION RECEIVED DURING OUR GREAT WAR....



...WE ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF COLLECTING WOMEN FROM DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE UNIVERSE FOR THE PURPOSE OF BEARING OUR CHILDREN...



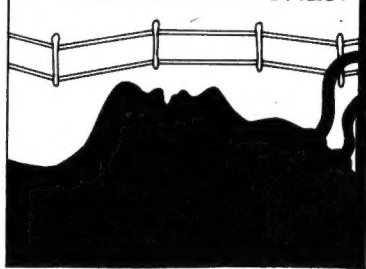
THE ROBOT PUTS AN END TO LEE-KAA'S ATTACK."



Campus Crier 1-15-1976



HAVING BEEN KNOCKED OUT BY AN UNFRIENDLY ROBOT, LEE-KAA HAS VIVID DREAMS OF A NIGHTMARE WORLD.



LEE-KAA WAKES UP FROM A DRUG-INDUCED NIGHTMARE TO FIND HERSELF IN STRANGE SURROUNDINGS...



UNNN...WHERE AM I NOW?

Campus Crier 1-29-1976

His Engagement Ring! by Charles Burns



BUT I LOVE CORRY! I
LOVE HIM! UNTIL TODAY
I THOUGHT HE LOVED
ME, TOO!

OF COURSE YOU DID, YOU
LITTLE FOOL! AND HE'S
BEEN **LAUGHING** AT YOU!
ALL **HE** WANTS IS YOUR
PROTRACTED COMPONENT!





YARG CARTOONS

PROLOGUE: JUDITH CALLOUSSE WAS SPENDING A QUIET EVENING AT HOME WHEN SHE HEARD A SCRATCHING NOISE COMING FROM THE OTHER ROOM.



SHE GOT UP TO SEE WHAT IT WAS



CHARLES BURNS

AAAAHHH. GOOD EVENING MISS CALLOUSSE. WE'VE COME FOR YOU BECAUSE I NEED YOU... FOR AN EXPERIMENT!



CONTINUED

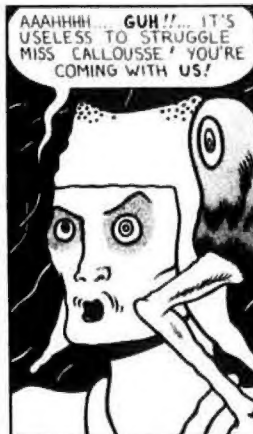
Cooper Point Journal v5n1, 1976

YARG CARTOONS

WHILE SPENDING A QUIET EVENING IN HER APARTMENT, JUDITH CALLOUSSE SUDDENLY FINDS HERSELF DEFENCELESS AGAINST THE ATTACK OF A STRANGELY DRESSED SCIENTIST AND HIS MUTANT COMPANIONS.



AAAAHHH... GUH!... IT'S USELESS TO STRUGGLE MISS CALLOUSSE! YOU'RE COMING WITH US!



CHARLES BURNS

AFTER JUDITH HAS BEEN SUBDUDED, THEY CARRY HER OUT TO A WAITING CAR AND DRIVE OFF INTO THE NIGHT.



CONTINUED

Cooper Point Journal v5n2, 1976

YARG CARTOONS



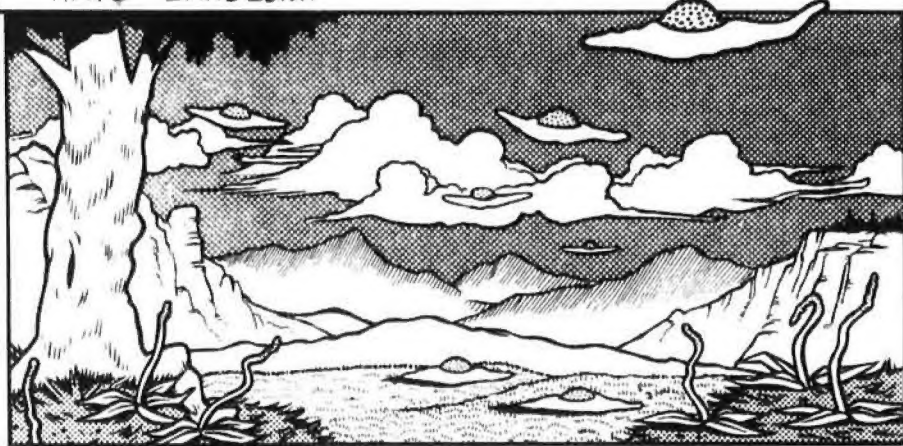
AFTER BEING ABDUCTED FROM HER APARTMENT AND DRIVEN TO AN UNDERGROUND LABORATORY, JUDITH CALLOUSSE IS PREPARED FOR A UNIQUE AND DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT



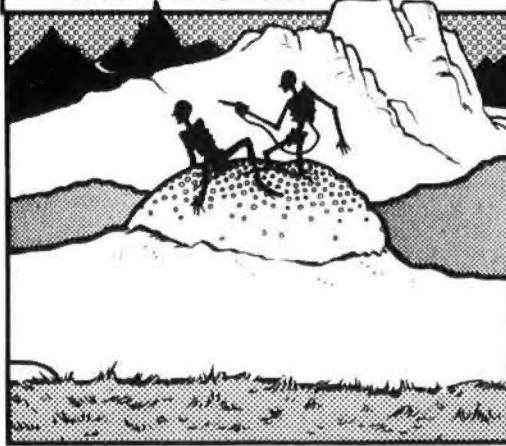
CHARLES BURNS

Cooper Point Journal v5n5, 1977

IN A VALLEY, TWELVE MILES OUT OF PASTORALVILLE,
A NUMBER OF SOFT, EGG-SHAPED FLYING OBJECTS
HAVE LANDED....



CREATURES FROM A DISTANT
GALAXY EMERGE FROM
THE EGGS....



AHHH!! LOOK!!!
A BEAUTIFUL
EARTH - ANIMAL!!



SPARKLING
GOOD LOOKS



IT LOOKS SO
MUCH BETTER
WITHOUT ALL OF
THAT FLESH!

SICK COMIC
MOTIF.



NEXT: "I WAS A TEENAGE MUTANT."



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

by Charles Burns



Disjointed Jungle Tails

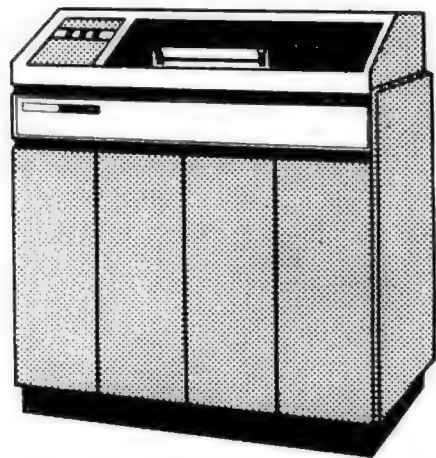
by Charles Burns



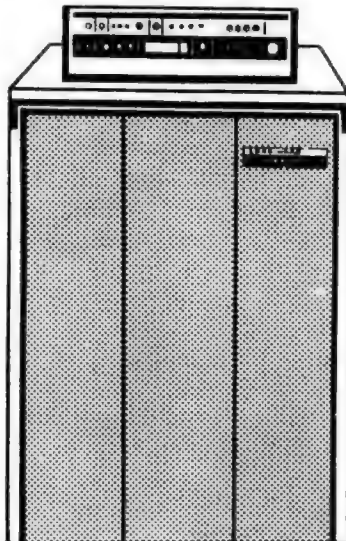
Pornographic Computer Love Stories

by Charles Burns

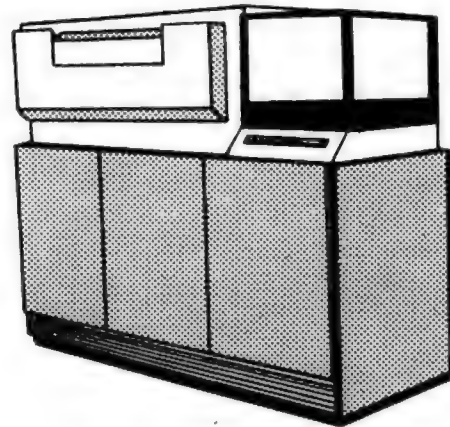
"OOOHHH... UGGGNN...BREAK A FEW MORE
CIRCUITS," IT MOANED.



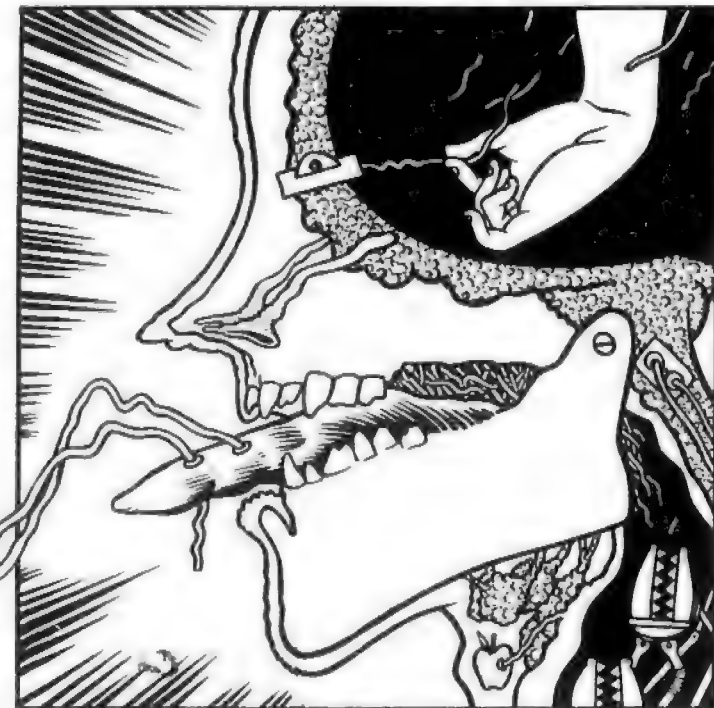
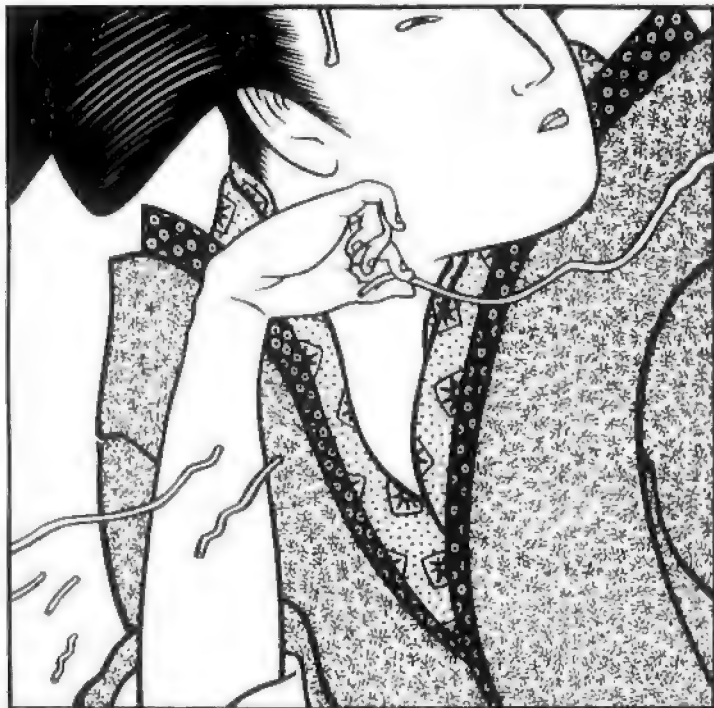
"UHH-UHH-UGG-NNNN... GOOD LORD!
I THINK MY ELEMENTARY PARTICLES
ARE IN A MODIFIED CONDITION!"



"GIVE ME AN ABNORMAL FREQUENCY!"
IT SAID, QUIVERING....



LettersOpinionLettersOpinion



Comics Under Male Supervision

DR. KILLMEN

by Zen Bald



NUDDSY

by Ennie Vertmooler



AUZZY CRAAP

by 'Ekk 'Eeythe



THE FAMILY IRKUS By ill Keen



6-66

② ill KEEN

"Shut the fuck up, Mommy! We're trying to watch TVT"

THE CAT WOMAN RETURNS

Charles Burns maintains his idiosyncratic edge even as the mainstream media embraces his vision. His stylized artwork perfectly suits the decade's post-modern paranoiac malaise, with recent appearances as a cover feature illustrator for *The New York Times Magazine* (July 28, 1991) and *Time* (Nov. 11, 1991) pushing him into the select stellar company of Boris Artzybasheff and Jack Davis. More than Davis, Burns' comicbook origins – specifically rooted in the horror genre – remain essential to the impact, techniques, and themes of his commercial illustration. Laudable, too, is his persistence, still working creatively in the far less lucrative comicbook industry.

"The Cat Woman Returns" was Burns' debut comic narrative, published here for the first time ever. The story was completed in 1979 while living in Davis, California (where he had just completed two years of art school), conceived at the invitation of "one of the faculty members at Davis [who] had just purchased an old printing press and asked me if I'd like to try printing up some sort of book on it," Charles recalls. "At that stage in my life, I was interested in lots of different kinds of art besides... comic drawings. I was making videos (of, like, performance art and stuff), painting big, ugly paintings,... sculpture (weird things made out of cloth, wire, blood, and plastic that resembled mutated underwear), and a lot of black-and-white photography. When I had the chance to publish a book, I came up with the idea of doing a photo-comic."

Fumettis have existed for decades, and remain popular in Europe, Mexico, and South America. Of these, only the "romance" *fumettis* produced in Italy (Omnium Publishing Corporation's full-color *Darling*, *Kiss* and *Photoromance Darling*) have been translated and sold on American newstands; these were in part the catalyst for "The Cat Woman Returns." "I had been looking at a lot of Mexican photo comics as well as some slicker photo romance comics imported from Italy," Charles says, "and it looked like it would be a lot of fun."

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

by Charles Burns





Completing the photography, prints, and plates himself, initial printing plans were foiled by the print press' failure to work. Months later, while living in Seattle, Washington, Charles stumbled into a publisher of "stuff like *Adults in Diapers*, *Men in Skirts*, and *Astounding Transvestite Tales*... [who] offered to publish my book if I'd do a few illustrations for *Men in Skirts* and pay for the paper," Charles tells us. The tentative business relationship soon dissolved. "With two strikes against me [and a third when RAW chose not to publish it, preferring Charles' shorter, drawn comics narratives] I packed up my photo comic and went on to other things."

Though its *fumetti* format inherently supplants Charles' characteristic art with atmospheric but static photographic imagery, "The Cat Woman Returns" is a remarkable prototype for his later creations. "It was a turning point in my life," Charles asserts. "It was the first real comic story I did that had a beginning, middle, and end. I had started all sorts of spaced out non-narrative comics and a load of ambitious, but not very well thought-out, comic strips for the school newspapers, but this was the first time I was able to put together the real thing." The knotting of its bizarre, parasitic romantic obsession into a brooding first-person psychodrama is as strong a signature of Burns' work as his distinctive art in later work. "Not long after I finished this story I realized I was really interested in working in an accessible and popular medium like comics, and went on to write and draw... my second real story, 'Ill Bred' [seeing print long after its completion, in Denis Kitchen's 1985 revival of *Death Rattle*]."

"Thirteen years after its inception, my horror romance photo comic is rearing its ugly head and peering out into the cold light of day," Charles concludes. Cast your eyes to the right, and savor the dark maiden voyage of Charles' imagination.

ALL TRUE PERSONAL PRIVATE REALISTIC REVEALING ROMANTIC LOVE CONFESSION



© 1976 Charles Burns, from *The Cooper Point Journal*, Olympia, WA. (Editor: Matt Groening).

BIBLIOGRAPHY - CHARLES BURNS

Stories and art in RAW Vol.1, #3-8 (RAW Books & Graphics, 1981-1988), Vol. 2, #1 & 2 (Penguin, 1989-90); "El Borbáh" stories in *Heavy Metal* (Jan., Aug.1983, March-June '84, Jan.-June '85); *Dope Comix* #5 (cover only, 1984); *Death Rattle* #1 (Kitchen Sink, 1985); *Big Baby: Curse of the Molemen* (RAW Books, 1986; reprint by Kitchen Sink, 1989); *Real Defective Stories* (Pantheon, 1988; includes 'El Borbáh' stories from *Heavy Metal*); *Taboo* #1, 4, 5 (SpiderBaby, 1988-present); *Pixie Meat* (w/Gary Panter, Water Row Books, 1990; reprinted in *Snake Eyes*, Fantagraphics, 1991); *Buzz* #2,3 (Kitchen Sink, 1991); Burns has also appeared in *Frigidaire* and *Alter Alter* (both Italy), *El Vibora* (Spain), *Metal Hurlant* (France), and *Blast!* (U.K.), and worked as Concept Designer for Mark Morris Dance Company's Brussels performance of "The Hard Nut" (an adaptation of "The Nutcracker Suite"; January and December, 1991; videotaped for future broadcast on PBS's *Dance America*).

THE
CAT WOMAN
RETURNS



< BURNS
1979

JULY 28, 1979



I WOKE UP SICK IN A HOT
APARTMENT. EVEN BEFORE I
OPENED MY EYES I SENSED
SHE WAS GONE.



THERE WAS A HEAVY STENCH IN THE AIR OF
BLOOD AND PERSPIRATION...



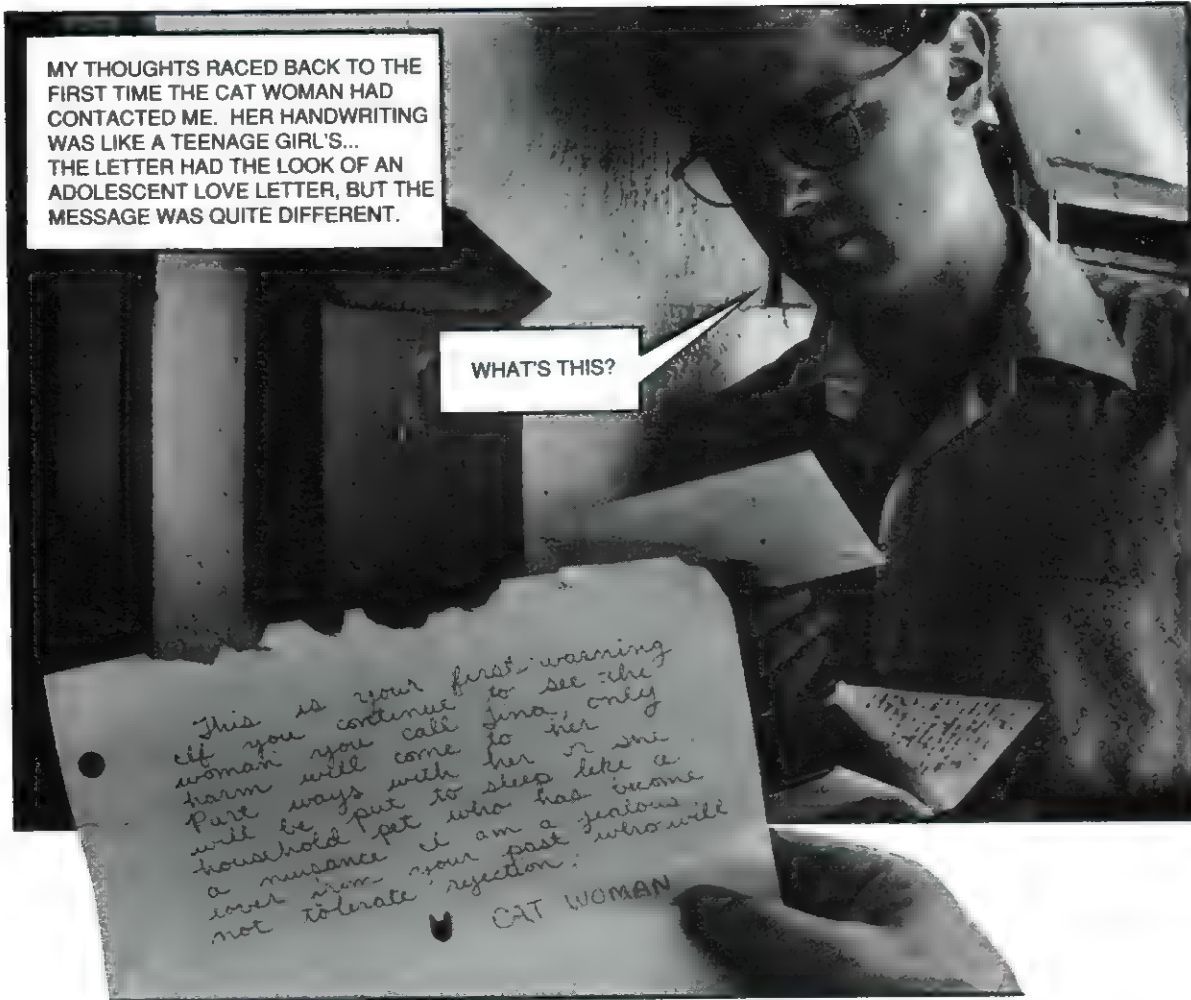
I HAD NO TIME TO PREPARE MYSELF FOR
THE SHOCK I WAS ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE

AW, JESUS...





ALL OF THIS BLOOD...THE TORN SHEETS. THE CAT WOMAN HAS KEPT HER WORD: TINA IS DEAD.

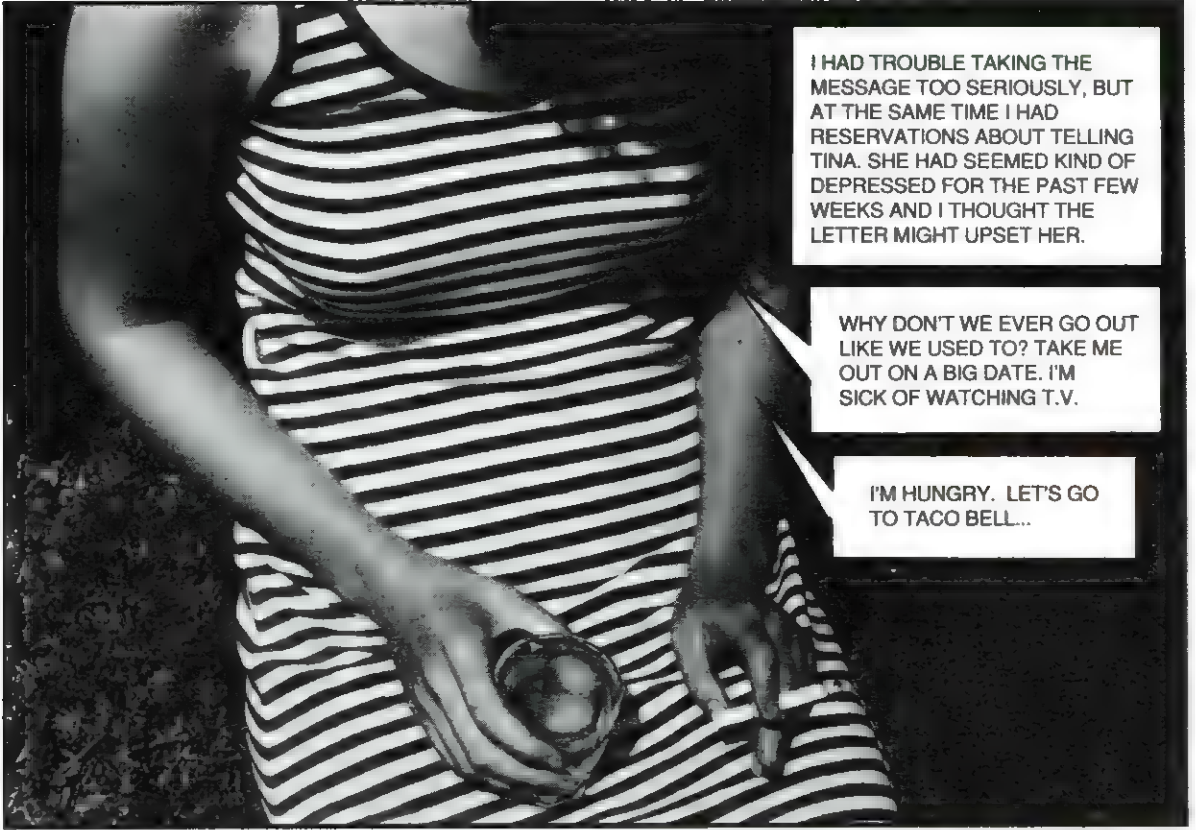


MY THOUGHTS RACED BACK TO THE FIRST TIME THE CAT WOMAN HAD CONTACTED ME. HER HANDWRITING WAS LIKE A TEENAGE GIRL'S... THE LETTER HAD THE LOOK OF AN ADOLESCENT LOVE LETTER, BUT THE MESSAGE WAS QUITE DIFFERENT.

WHAT'S THIS?

This is your first warning
if you continue to see the
woman you call Tina, only
harm will come to her
Pure ways with her or she
will be put to sleep like a
household pet who has become
a nuisance. I am a jealous
lover from your past who will
not tolerate rejection.

♥ CAT WOMAN



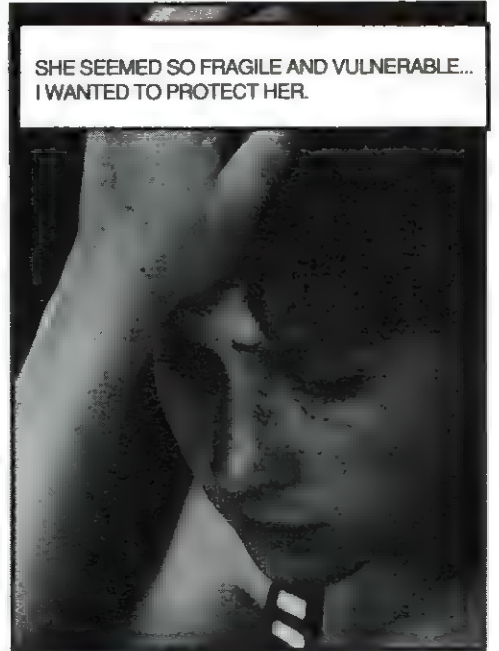
I HAD TROUBLE TAKING THE MESSAGE TOO SERIOUSLY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME I HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT TELLING TINA. SHE HAD SEEMED KIND OF DEPRESSED FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS AND I THOUGHT THE LETTER MIGHT UPSET HER.

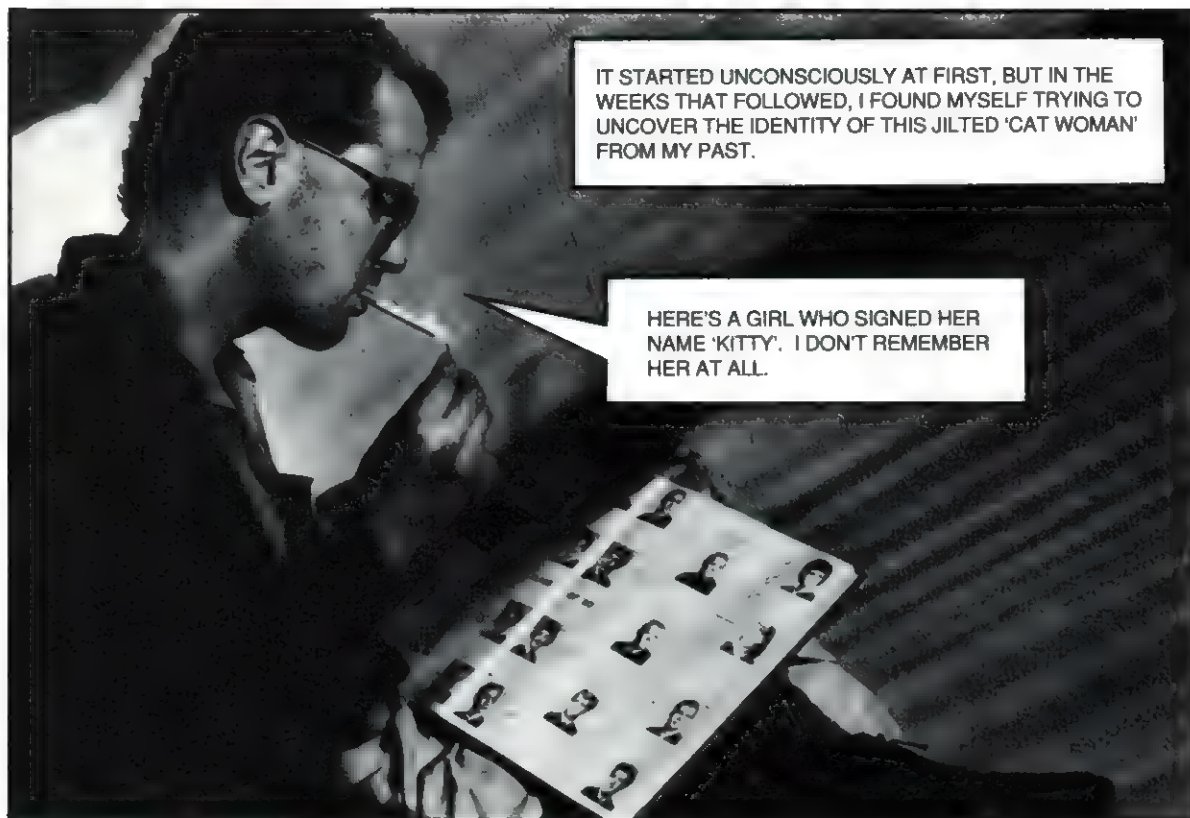
WHY DON'T WE EVER GO OUT LIKE WE USED TO? TAKE ME OUT ON A BIG DATE. I'M SICK OF WATCHING T.V.

I'M HUNGRY. LET'S GO TO TACO BELL...

I HAD ONLY KNOWN HER FOR ABOUT FOUR MONTHS BUT I WAS TOTALLY INFATUATED WITH HER.

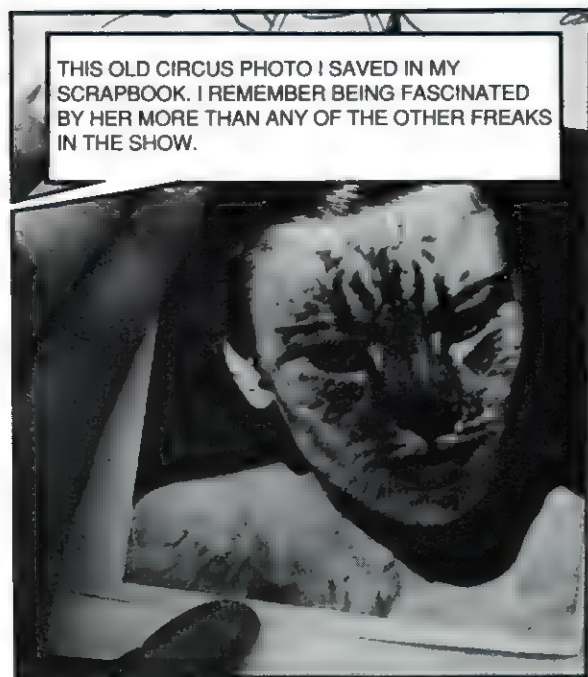
SHE SEEMED SO FRAGILE AND VULNERABLE... I WANTED TO PROTECT HER.



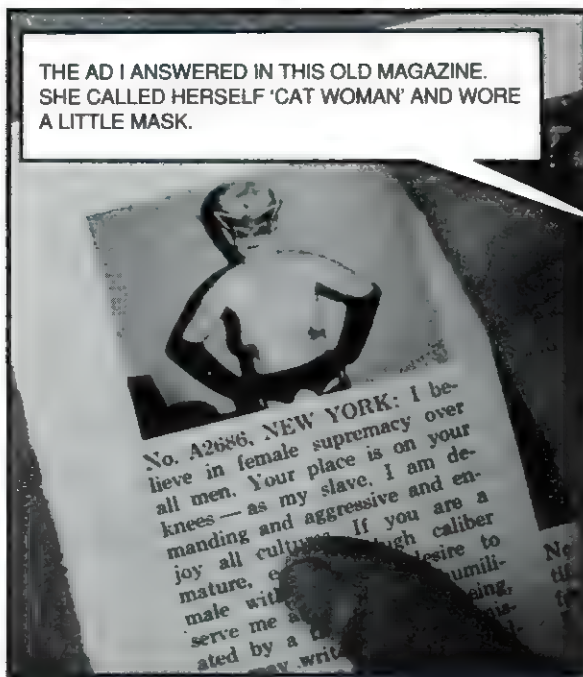


IT STARTED UNCONSCIOUSLY AT FIRST, BUT IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, I FOUND MYSELF TRYING TO UNCOVER THE IDENTITY OF THIS JILTED 'CAT WOMAN' FROM MY PAST.

HERE'S A GIRL WHO SIGNED HER NAME 'KITTY'. I DON'T REMEMBER HER AT ALL.



THIS OLD CIRCUS PHOTO I SAVED IN MY SCRAPBOOK. I REMEMBER BEING FASCINATED BY HER MORE THAN ANY OF THE OTHER FREAKS IN THE SHOW.



THE AD I ANSWERED IN THIS OLD MAGAZINE. SHE CALLED HERSELF 'CAT WOMAN' AND WORE A LITTLE MASK.

No. A2686, NEW YORK: I believe in female supremacy over all men. Your place is on your knees — as my slave. I am demanding and aggressive and enjoy all cultures. If you are a mature, experienced female, I desire to serve me with your mouth. Being dominated by a female is my wish. Write to me at No. A2686, New York.



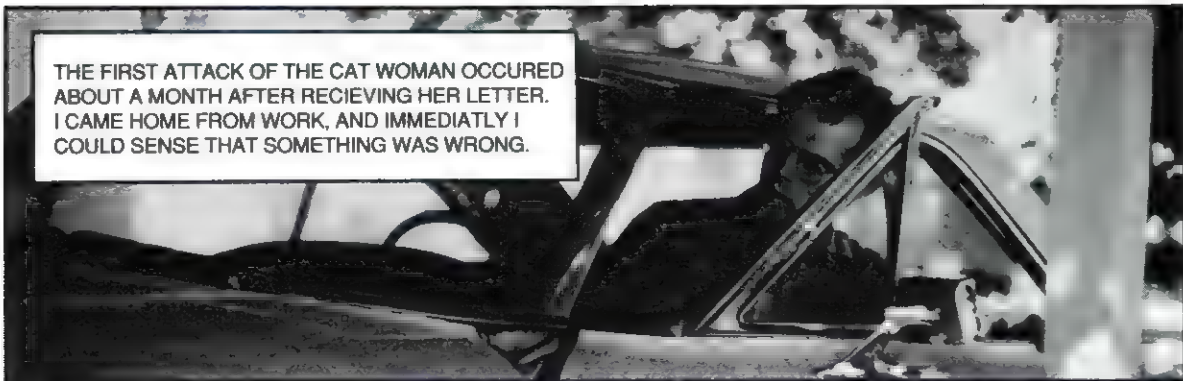
THEN THERE WAS A WOMAN I MET IN A BAR ONE NIGHT. IT WASN'T UNTIL WE STEPPED OUT INTO THE LIGHT THAT I NOTICED THE SCARS ON HER CHEEK THAT RESEMBLED CAT WISKERS.

I ALSO REMBERED A GIRL IN HIGH SCHOOL WHO ALWAYS WORE A BLACK CAT PIN ON HER RIGHT BREAST.

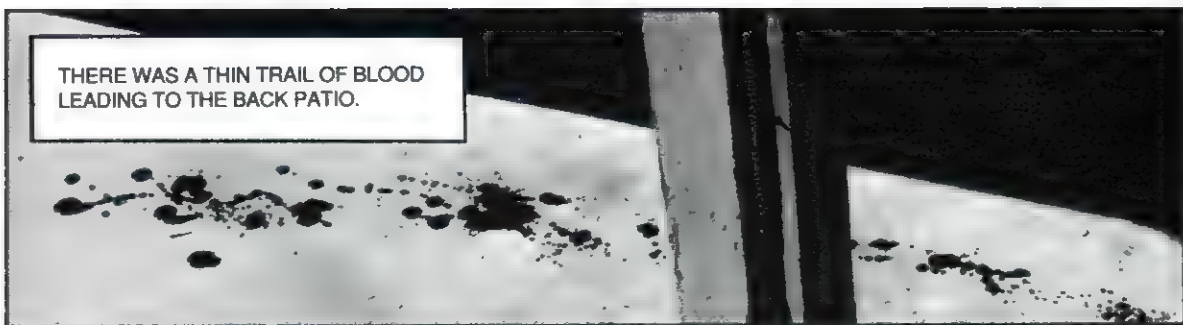


SHE SCRATCHED ME ONCE...

THE FIRST ATTACK OF THE CAT WOMAN OCCURED ABOUT A MONTH AFTER RECIEVING HER LETTER. I CAME HOME FROM WORK, AND IMMEDIATLY I COULD SENSE THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG.



THERE WAS A THIN TRAIL OF BLOOD LEADING TO THE BACK PATIO.



IT LEAD TO ANOTHER LETTER AND A PILE OF MEAT AND BONES THAT HAD ONCE BEEN MY DOG.

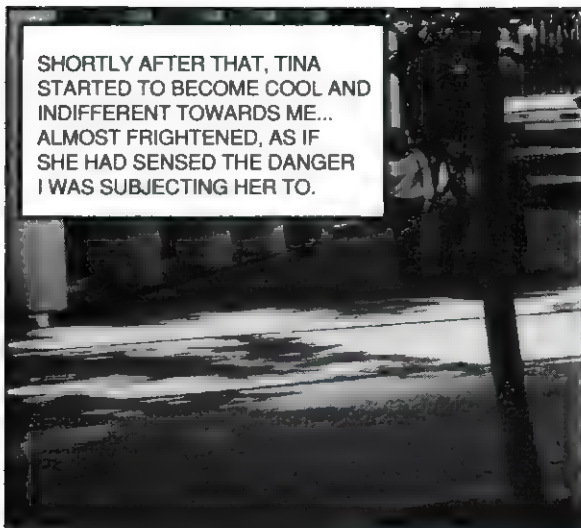


You have disobeyed my orders
by continuing to see the bitch dog
you call Tina. If you continue
to lower yourself by associating
with her you will find her
split end to end like this mongrel
dog of yours.

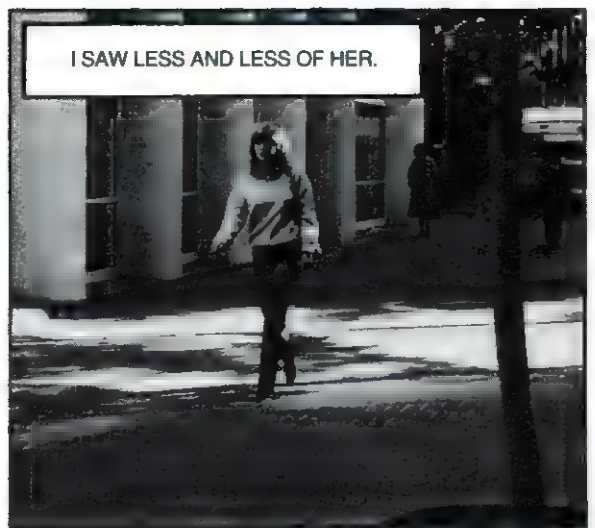
☹ CAT WOMAN



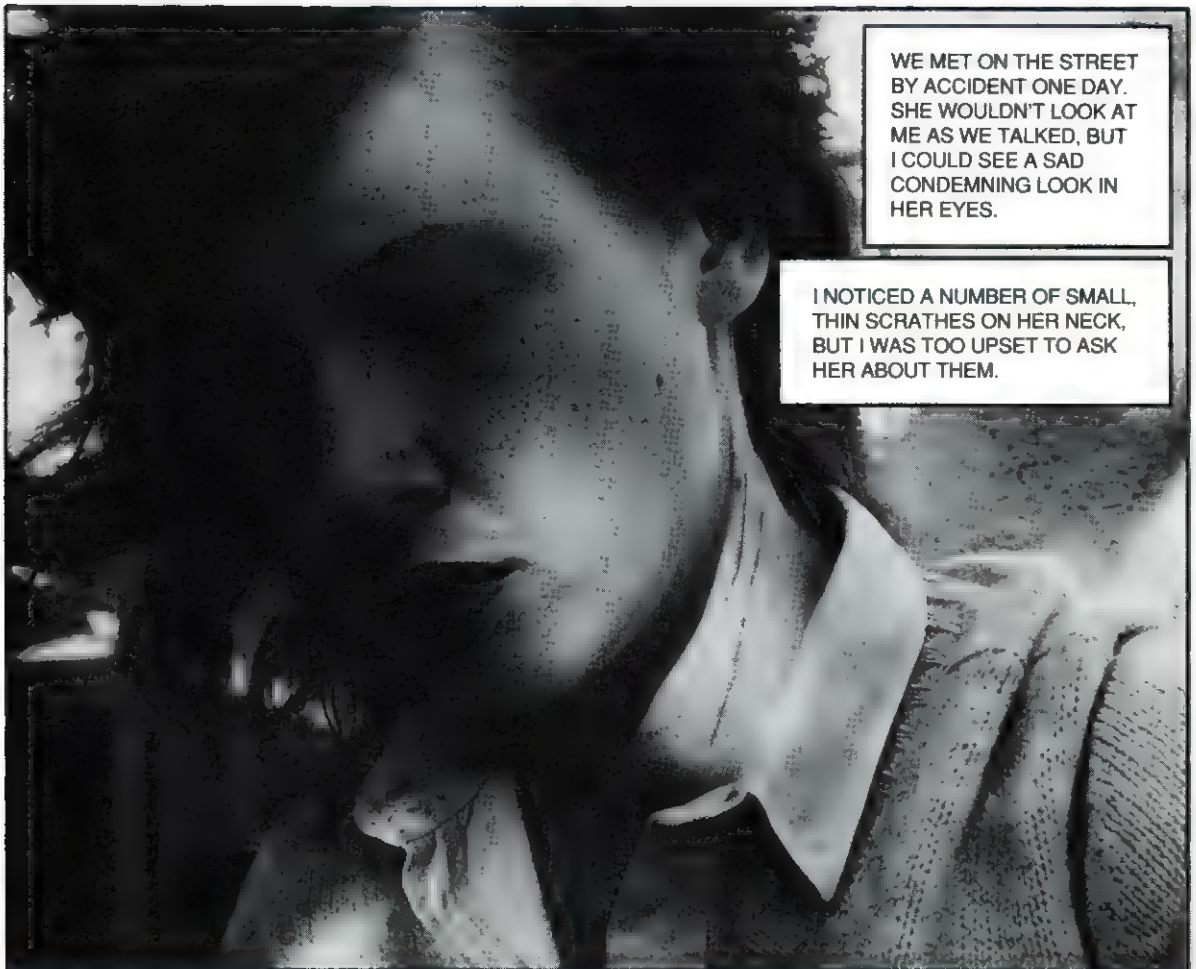
I WAS EXPECTING TINA TO
COME OVER FOR DINNER, SO
I HAD TO WORK QUICKLY TO
HIDE THE LETTER AND CLEAN
UP LUCKY'S REMAINS.



SHORTLY AFTER THAT, TINA
STARTED TO BECOME COOL AND
INDIFFERENT TOWARDS ME...
ALMOST FRIGHTENED, AS IF
SHE HAD SENSED THE DANGER
I WAS SUBJECTING HER TO.

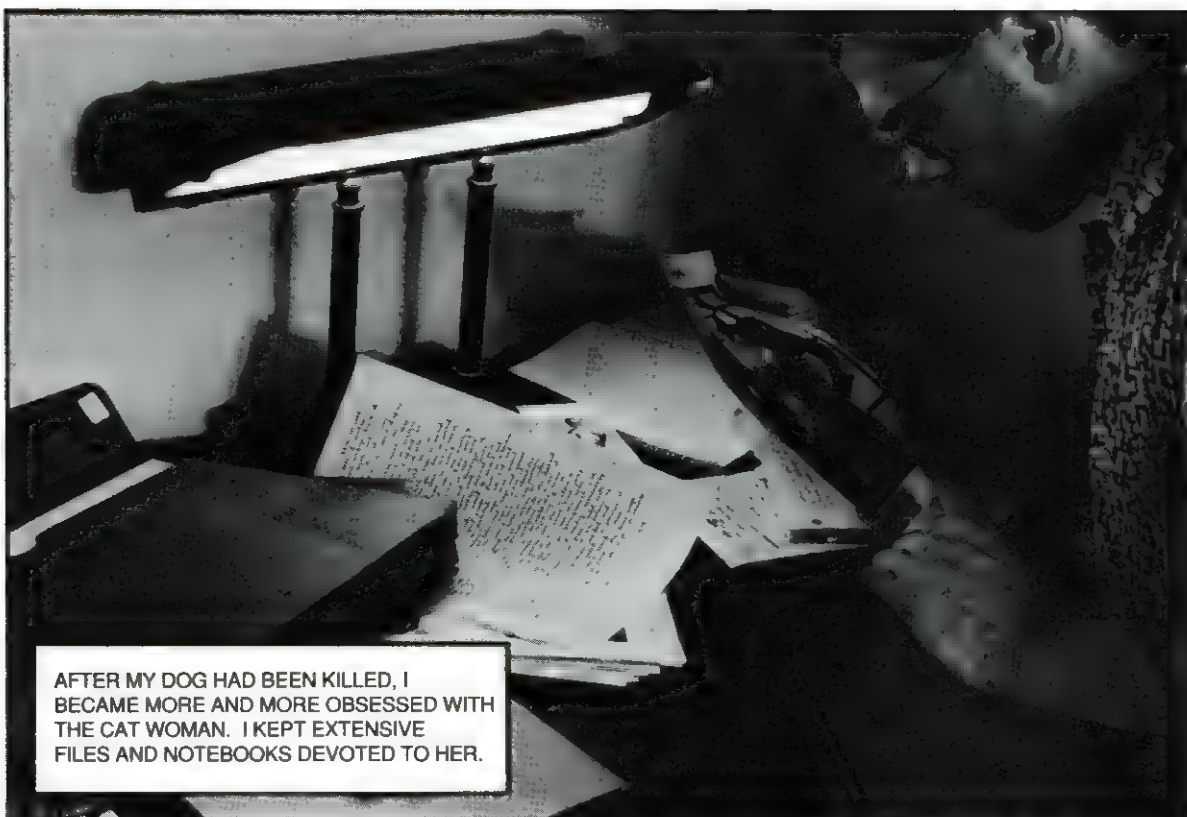


I SAW LESS AND LESS OF HER.



WE MET ON THE STREET
BY ACCIDENT ONE DAY.
SHE WOULDN'T LOOK AT
ME AS WE TALKED, BUT
I COULD SEE A SAD
CONDEMNING LOOK IN
HER EYES.

I NOTICED A NUMBER OF SMALL,
THIN SCRATHES ON HER NECK,
BUT I WAS TOO UPSET TO ASK
HER ABOUT THEM.

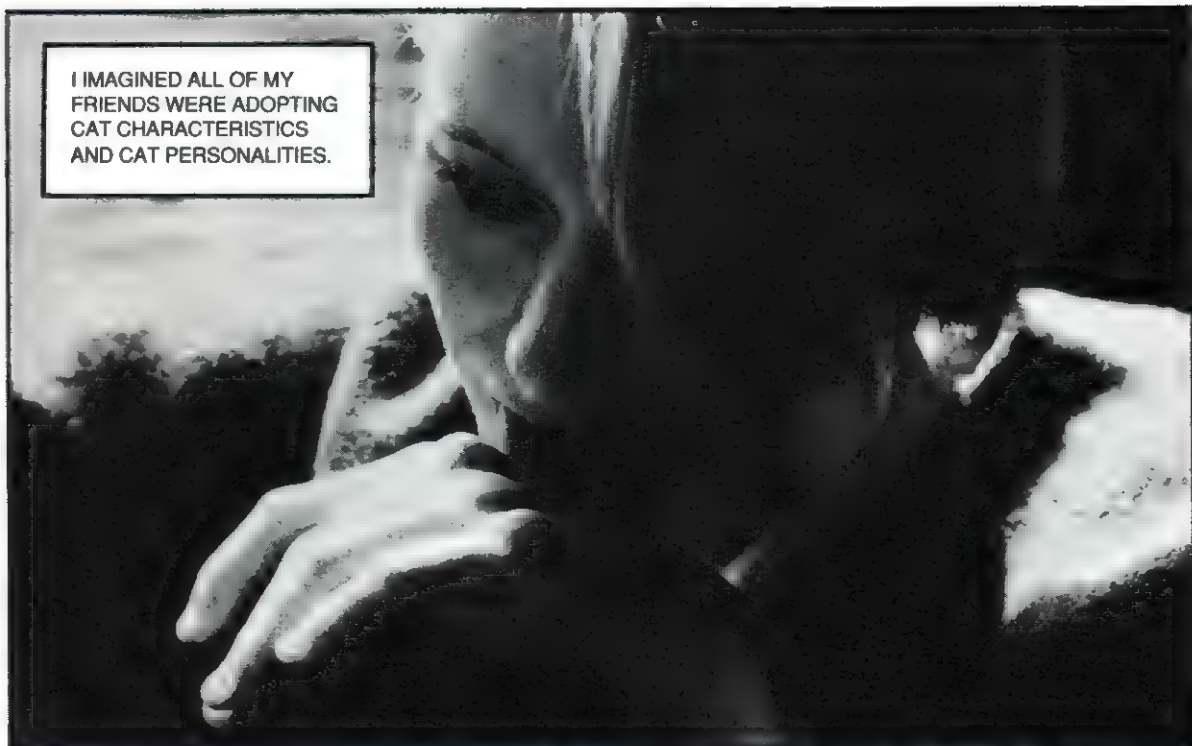


AFTER MY DOG HAD BEEN KILLED, I BECAME MORE AND MORE OBSESSED WITH THE CAT WOMAN. I KEPT EXTENSIVE FILES AND NOTEBOOKS DEVOTED TO HER.



I FOUND MYSELF DRAWING LITTLE PICTURES OF HER WHEN I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE WORKING...

I IMAGINED ALL OF MY
FRIENDS WERE ADOPTING
CAT CHARACTERISTICS
AND CAT PERSONALITIES.

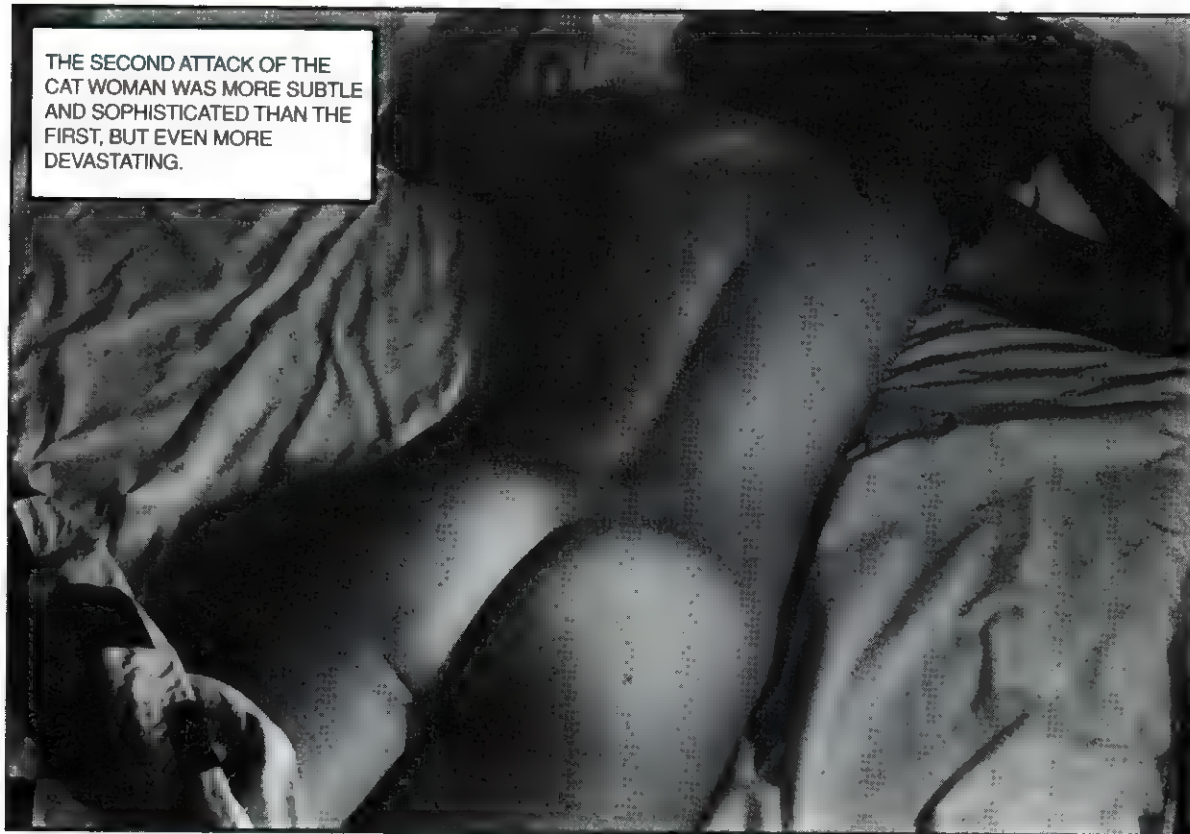




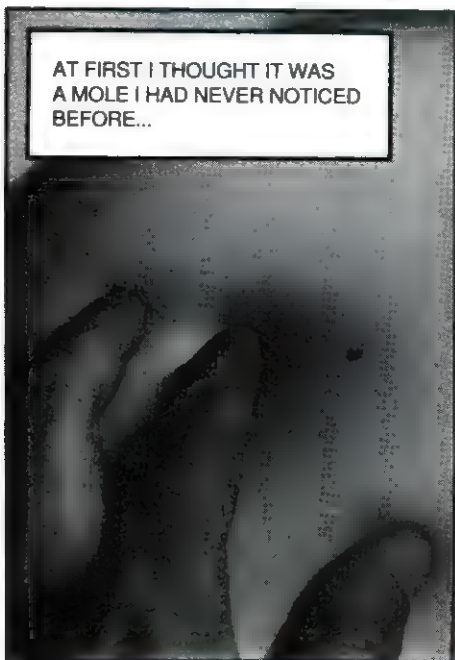
I SPENT HOURS IMAGINING
HORRIBLE TORTURES SHE
MIGHT INFLICT ON HER VICTIMS.
HOURS OF SCRATCHING AND
WRAPPING.



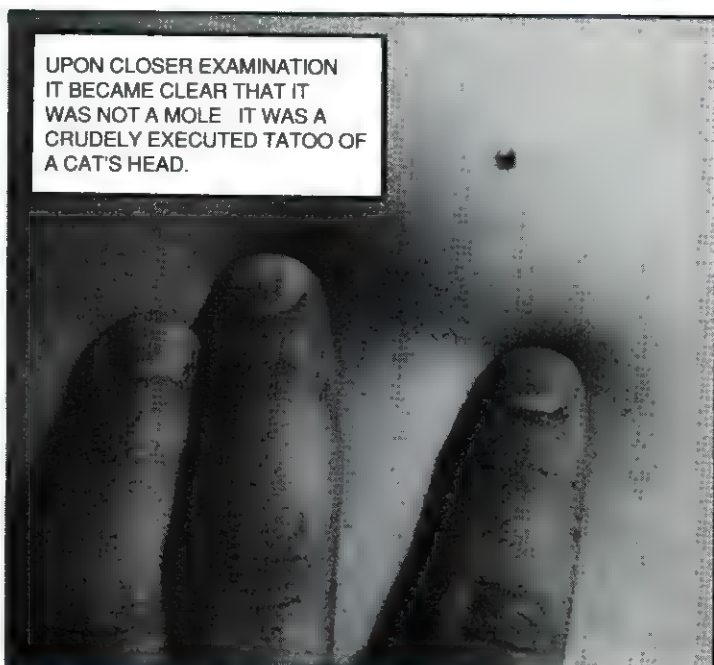
THE SECOND ATTACK OF THE
CAT WOMAN WAS MORE SUBTLE
AND SOPHISTICATED THAN THE
FIRST, BUT EVEN MORE
DEVASTATING.



AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS
A MOLE I HAD NEVER NOTICED
BEFORE...



UPON CLOSER EXAMINATION
IT BECAME CLEAR THAT IT
WAS NOT A MOLE IT WAS A
CRUDELY EXECUTED TATOO OF
A CAT'S HEAD.



A black and white photograph of a woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a dark, long-sleeved top. She is sitting at a table, looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. On the table in front of her is a bottle of dark rum, a glass, and some food. A small plant is visible on the left side of the table.

WE HAD A LONG, PLEASANT DINNER DESPITE MY HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE. WE DRANK DARK RUM AND TINA STARTED A LONG CONVERSATION ABOUT HER CHILDHOOD.

...AND WHEN WE LIVED IN MARYLAND OUR HOUSE WAS HUGE AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD WAS FILLED WITH KIDS. I HAD A FAVORITE CAT...BIG AND BLACK WITH A WHITE SPOT ON HIS EYE...

A black and white photograph of the same woman from the first panel, shown in profile. She is looking down and gesturing with her right hand, which is raised and open.

I CALLED HIM PETE, BUT HE GOT RUN OVER IN FRONT OF OUR HOUSE...

A black and white photograph of a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a dark shirt. He is looking towards the left with a concerned expression. A lightning bolt symbol is visible in the background.

JOHN! WHAT'S THE MATTER!!

SHE AVOIDED ME TO A POINT WHERE
I WASN'T SEEING HER AT ALL.

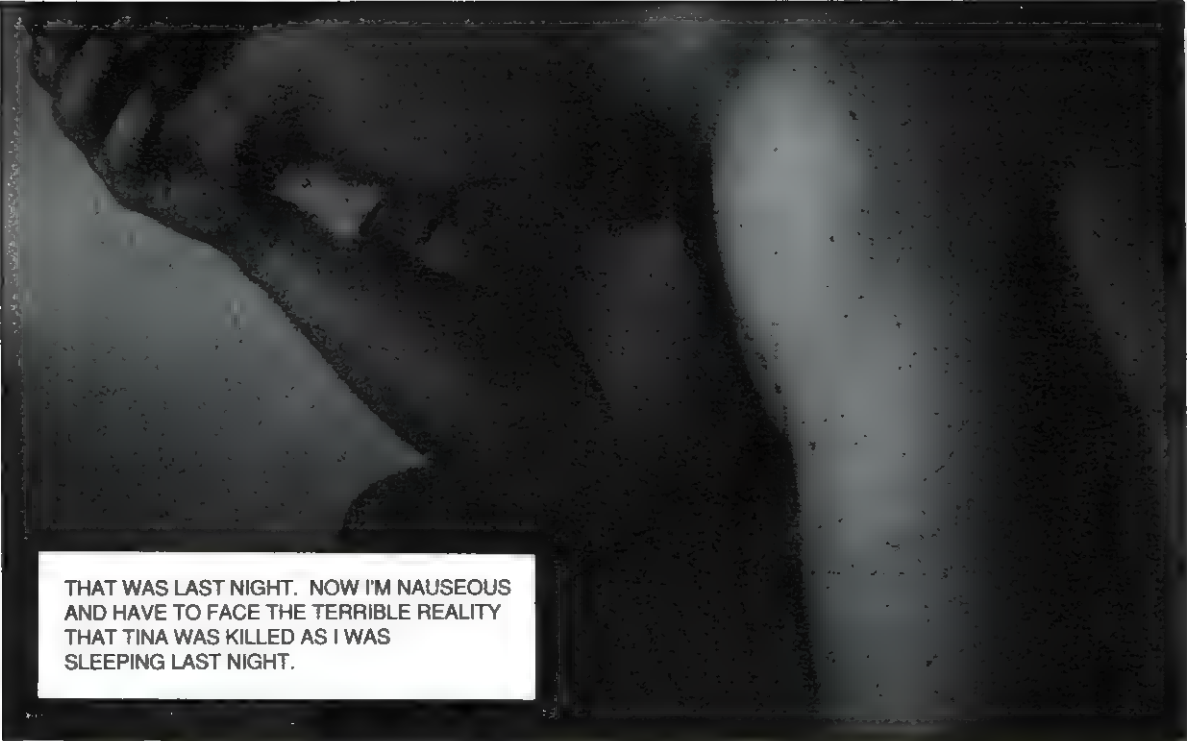


I HAD TO PLEAD WITH HER AT LENGTH
TO COME OVER SO WE COULD DISCUSS
THE PROBLEM WE WERE HAVING.

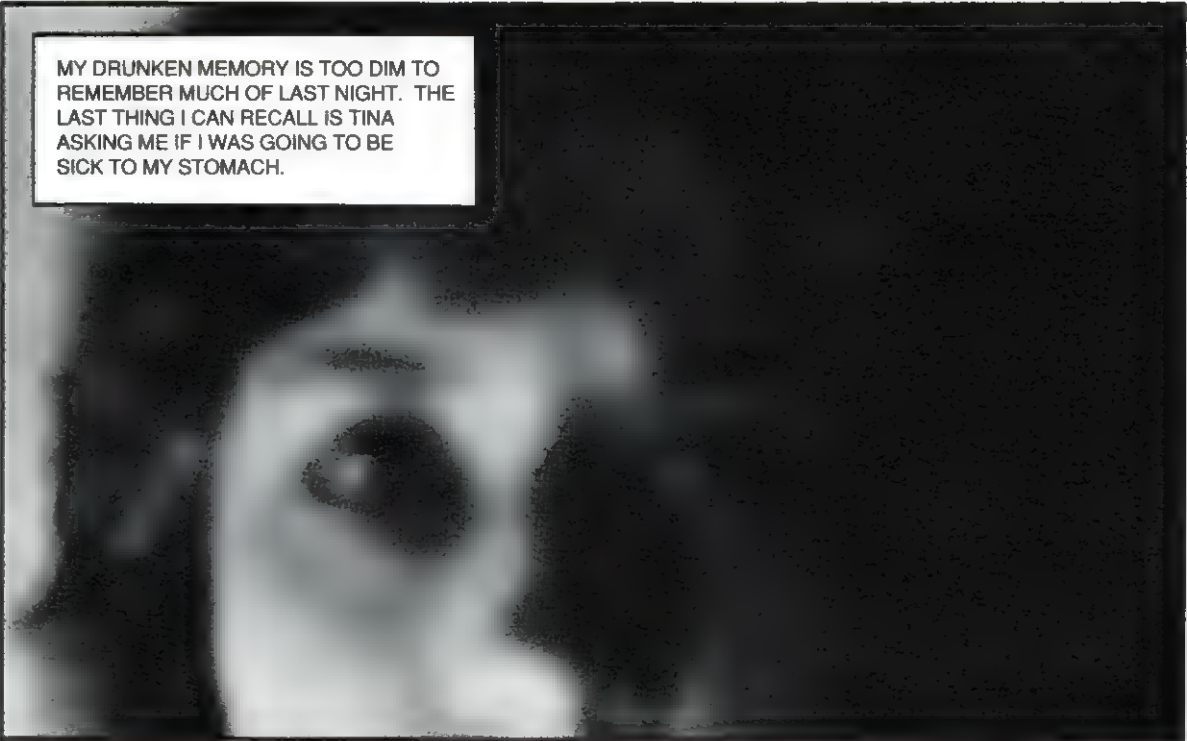


AFTER SHE ARRIVED
WE SAT AND TALKED.
WE TALKED ENDLESSLY
AND AS WE TALKED, WE
DRANK. I PULLED OUT
EVERY BOTTLE IN THE
HOUSE





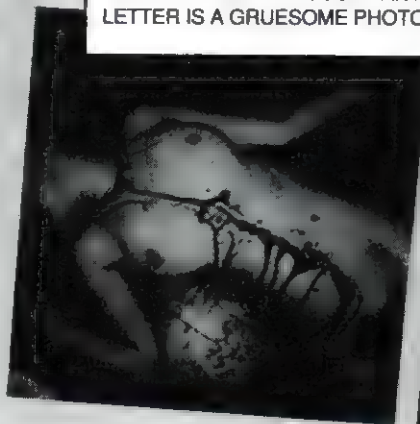
THAT WAS LAST NIGHT. NOW I'M NAUSEOUS
AND HAVE TO FACE THE TERRIBLE REALITY
THAT TINA WAS KILLED AS I WAS
SLEEPING LAST NIGHT.



MY DRUNKEN MEMORY IS TOO DIM TO
REMEMBER MUCH OF LAST NIGHT. THE
LAST THING I CAN RECALL IS TINA
ASKING ME IF I WAS GOING TO BE
SICK TO MY STOMACH.

Your wish has
come true. I'm
glad it took
you so long to
realize just how
much I really
am welcome in
your heart and I
will remain your
forever friend.

IT TAKES ME PERHAPS A HALF HOUR
TO PULL MYSELF TOGETHER TO FACE
THE INEVITABLE FINAL LETTER FROM
THE CAT WOMAN. ACCOMPANYING THE
LETTER IS A GRUESOME PHOTOGRAPH.



AS I STARE AT THE PHOTOGRAPH OF TINA'S
CORPSE, I NOTICE SOMETHING PECULIAR AT
THE VERY BOTTOM...SOMETHING BLACK.



WHAT'S THIS? YOU CAN
BARELY MAKE IT OUT.
IT...IT'S A PAIR OF
BLACK SHOES...

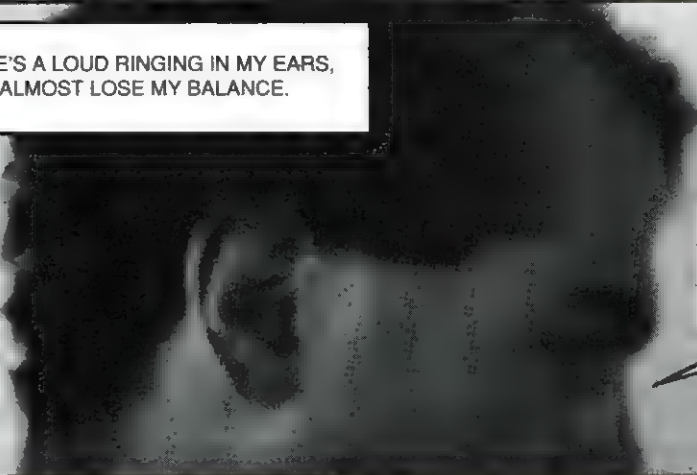


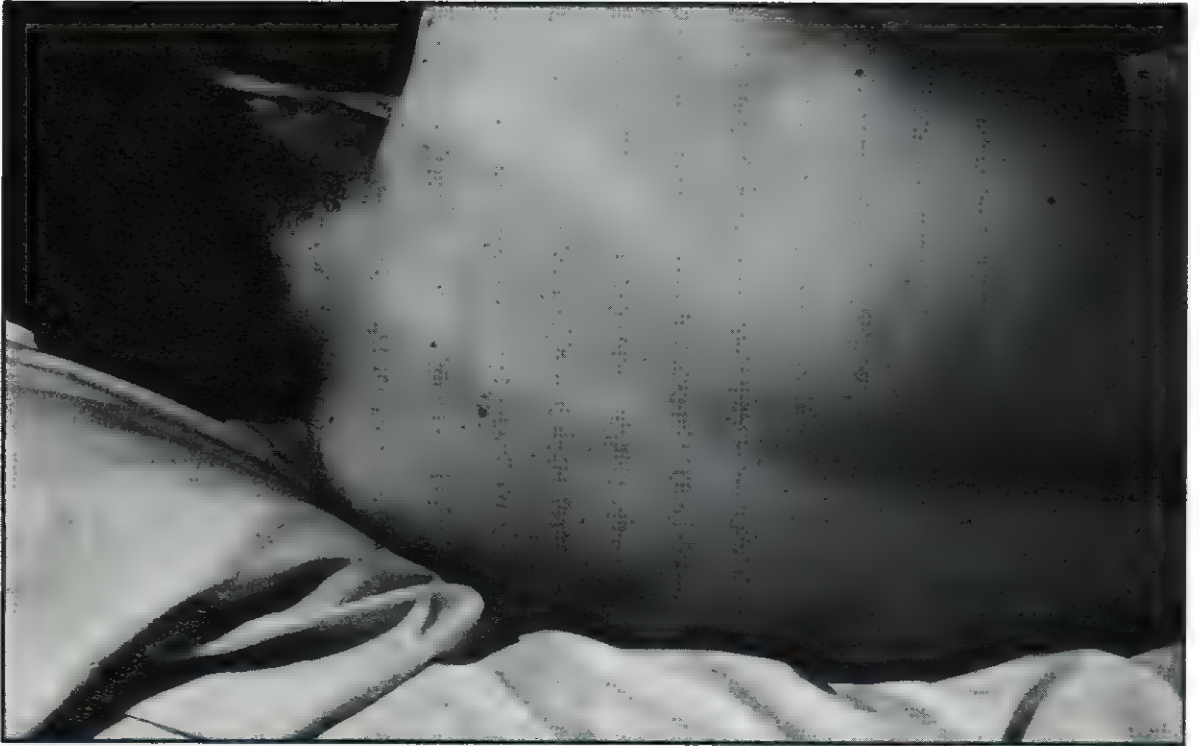
MY SHOES

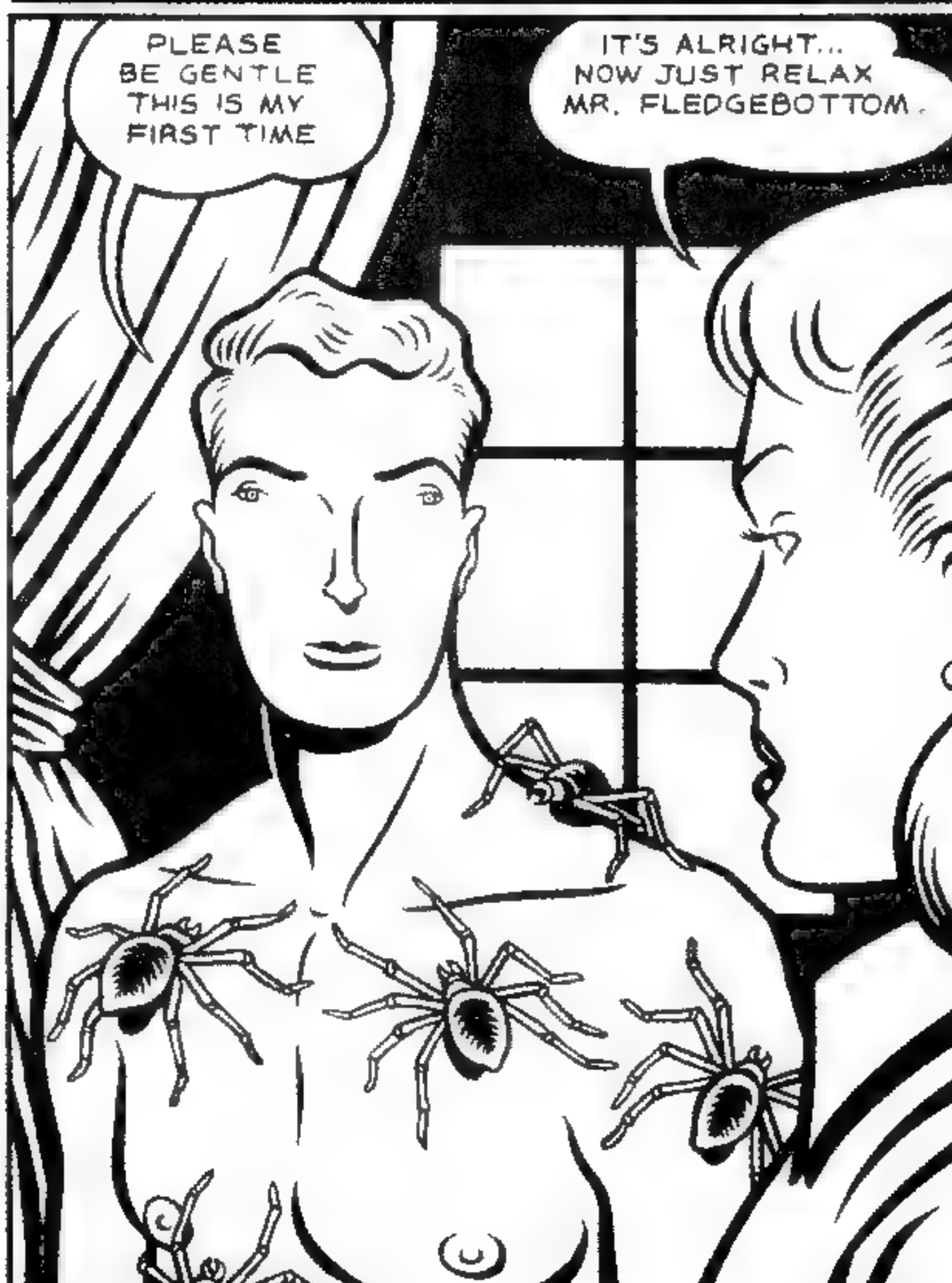


THERE'S A LOUD RINGING IN MY EARS,
AND I ALMOST LOSE MY BALANCE.

I'M SO TIRED...I MUST
GO BACK TO SLEEP...I
HAVE TO HAVE MORE SLEEP.



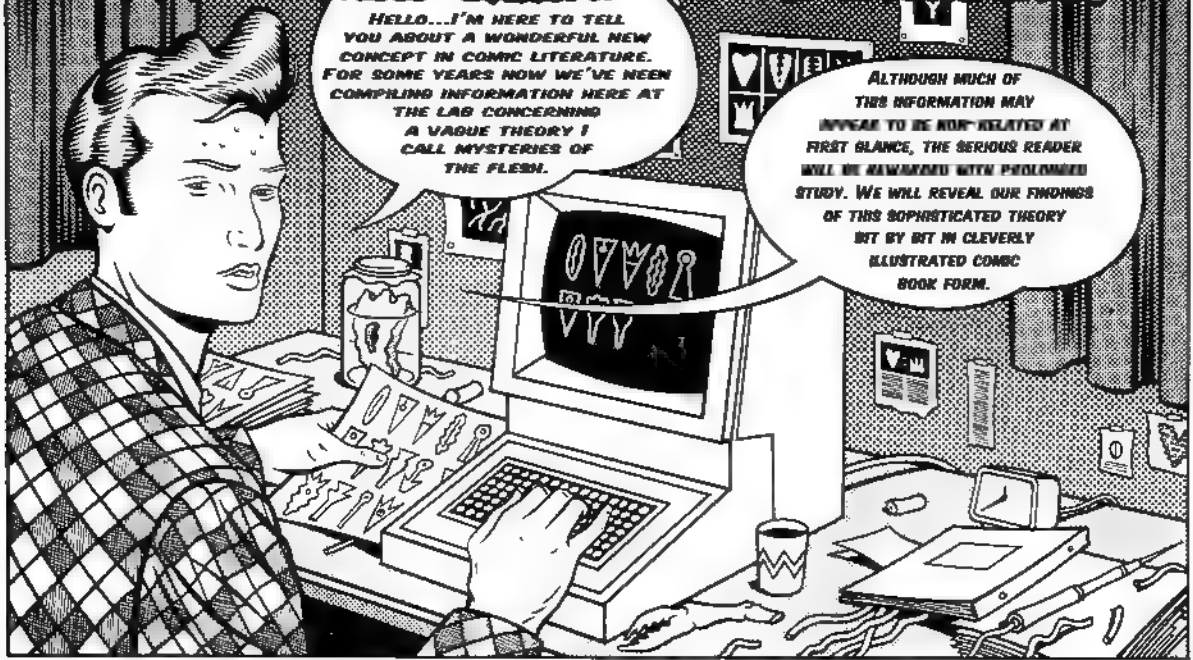






"FOUR-EYES" CONTEMPLATES
PUTTING ON THE CAT COSTUME...

MISTERIOS DE LA CARNE



HELLO...I'M HERE TO TELL YOU ABOUT A WONDERFUL NEW CONCEPT IN COMIC LITERATURE. FOR SOME YEARS NOW WE'VE BEEN COMPILING INFORMATION HERE AT THE LAB CONCERNING A VAGUE THEORY I CALL MYSTERIES OF THE FLESH.

ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THIS INFORMATION MAY APPEAR TO BE NON-RELATED AT FIRST GLANCE, THE SERIOUS READER WILL BE REWARDED WITH PROFOUND STUDY. WE WILL REVEAL OUR FINDINGS OF THIS SOPHISTICATED THEORY BIT BY BIT IN CLEVERLY ILLUSTRATED COMIC BOOK FORM.

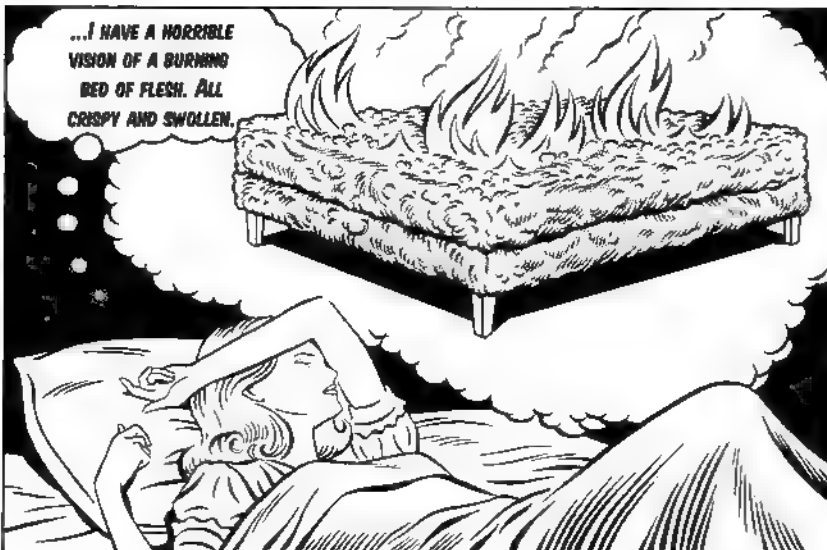
CHAPTER 1



OH NO...HOW WILL I FACE ANOTHER SLEEP-LESS NIGHT WITH THIS TERRIBLE IMAGE IN MY MIND?

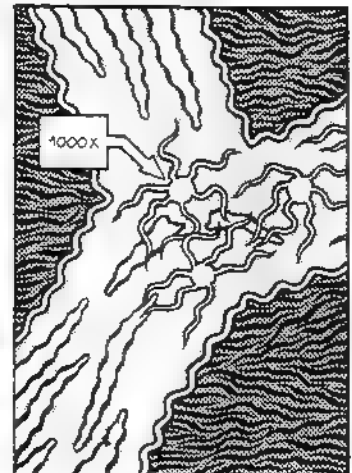


WHY IS THAT EVERY TIME I THINK ABOUT HIM...



...I HAVE A HORRIBLE VISION OF A BURNING BED OF FLESH. ALL CRISPY AND SWOLLEN.

NEXT: THE HORROR OF BEHOLDING CELLULAR MALFUNCTION



MYSTERIES OF THE FLESH: A TRUE CONFESSION

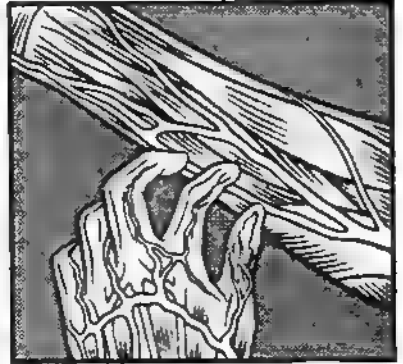
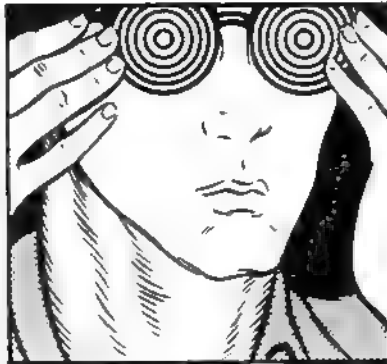
THEY ARE OUT THERE...
I CAN'T SEE THEM...
BUT, I CAN SENSE THEM
BEHIND THE WALLS...
COLLECTING INFORMATION,
GETTING READY. THEY THINK
I'M CRAZY. MAYBE I'M
DISTURBED, BUT I'M NOT CRAZY.
MIGHT BE WORSE IF THEY COULD
SEE WHAT I AM. IT ALL STARTED
WITH THAT AD IN THE COMIC.



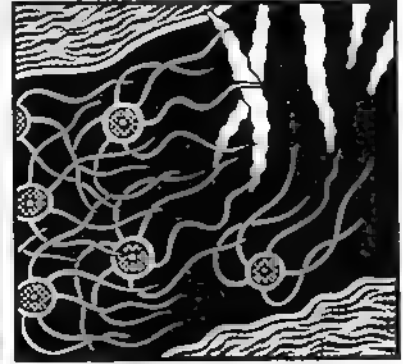
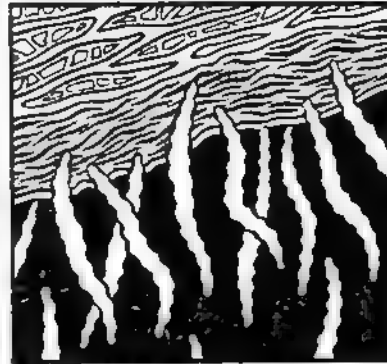
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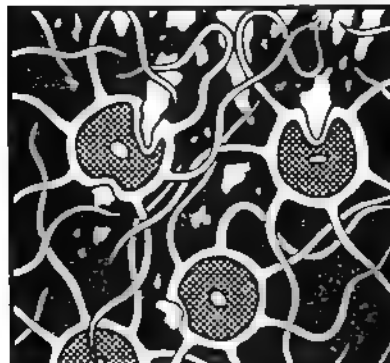
**LOCK BLADE
SEKITTO**



SOMETHING MADE ME ORDER A PAIR OF X-RAY GLASSES. WHAT THEY SENT ME WAS NO CHEAP KNOCK OFF...
I PUT THEM ON AND WHAT I SAW WAS TERRIBLE AND INDESCRIBABLE. I GOT NERVELESS WHEN I LOOKED AT MY ARM...
I COULD SEE THROUGH MY FLESH...BLOOD BEATING THROUGH MY VEINS...MUSCLES...



AS I STARED DEEPLY INTO WHAT LOOKED LIKE A GAPING WOUND. AS HARD AS I TRIED I COULDN'T LOOK AWAY.
I STARED AND SAW WHAT LOOKED LIKE WHITE WORMS TRYING TO GET INTO MY MUSCLES. FROM MY UPPER ARM,
A TORRENT OF AGGRESSIVE BLACK CELLS BEGAN TO ATTACK THE WHITE WORMS ON MY LOWER ARM.



THE BLACK CELLS BEGAN TO EXTERMINATE THE WHITE WORMS...MY GIRLFRIEND CAME IN EATING A HAMBURGER.
I COULD BARELY WATCH HER. AS WATCHING HER SWALLOW WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO LOOK AT...IT TOOK ME
HOURS TO FINALLY CALM DOWN...

MYSTERIES OF THE FLESH



**MISTERIOS DE
LA CARNE...**

A FEW MONTHS AGO...THE ALLURE OF HAPPINESS
AS HE WALKED TOWARDS THE ALTAR...
THOSE GLASSY, HONEYMOON WEEKS...FULL OF HOPE
AND LAUGHTER, DANCING AND JOY. THEN FINALLY,
THE NEW APARTMENT HE
HAD DECIDED AND PURSUED TOGETHER.

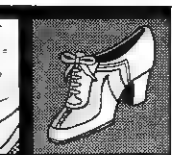
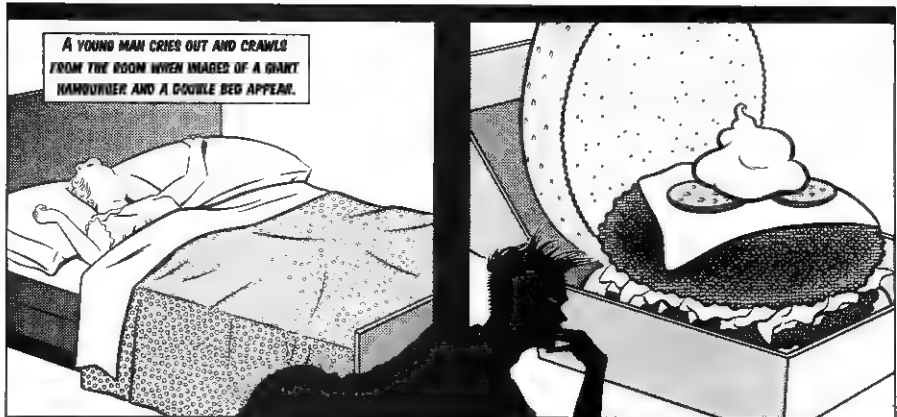


AND NOW...WAY TO SOON THE ENIGMA HAD CHANGED
THOSE DELICATE WORDS, THE SMALL DETAILS
BECAME LESS AND LESS. EVEN THE
WAY HE LOOKED AT HER HAD CHANGED.



TONIGHT...CLOSER TO DARK...HE GOT HOME
AFTER SPENDING THE NIGHT OUT, NOT THE
FIRST TIME HE HAD. USUALLY WITH A VAGUE
APOLOGY THAT HE HAD "BUSINESS AFFAIRS".

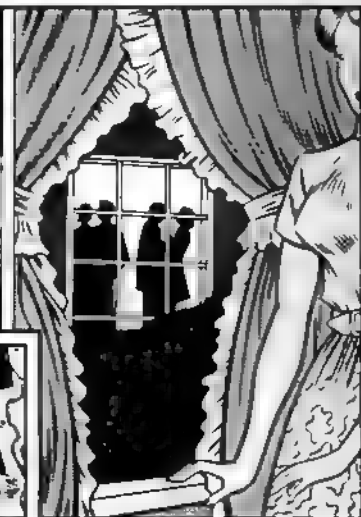
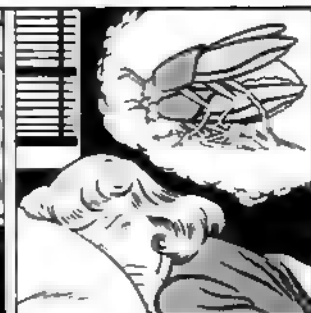
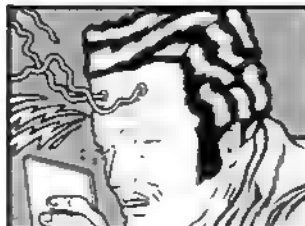




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FIN

... AND I PUT MY HAND ON HIS FACE, FEELING HIS SWOLLEN LIPS, AND ...



Love Diary

Dear Love Diary,
My life has been a long and endless search... a search that has, time after time, torn my heart in two... a search for normal love. Only a few short hours ago I thought my search was over. But... a boy, I went to highschool with... captain of the football team, most likely to succeed. Shortly after we graduated he started to change...

He started taking drugs and wore oddball clothes. He ran around with all sorts of weirdos.

Every time I saw him he seemed to have adopted a new identity... he went back to nature...



... he went punk...



... he went preppie...



You can imagine my surprise when I saw him last night at the Love Journal. It was as if he had transformed into the man of my dreams...



A man who was the flawless image of manhood... steel blue eyes gazing at me from across the room.



When he walked over and introduced himself I felt my heart rising in my throat...



...and when he invited me to his apartment for a drink, I heard myself saying yes.



Laying next to him that night, and hearing his soft breathing was like a dream come true. The scar running the length of his body was unusual, but I thought nothing of it at the time.



In the early morning light I got up to look for my clothes... what I found in his closet left me speechless in horror... a series of skins... dozens of varieties, with different hair-styles and skin colors.

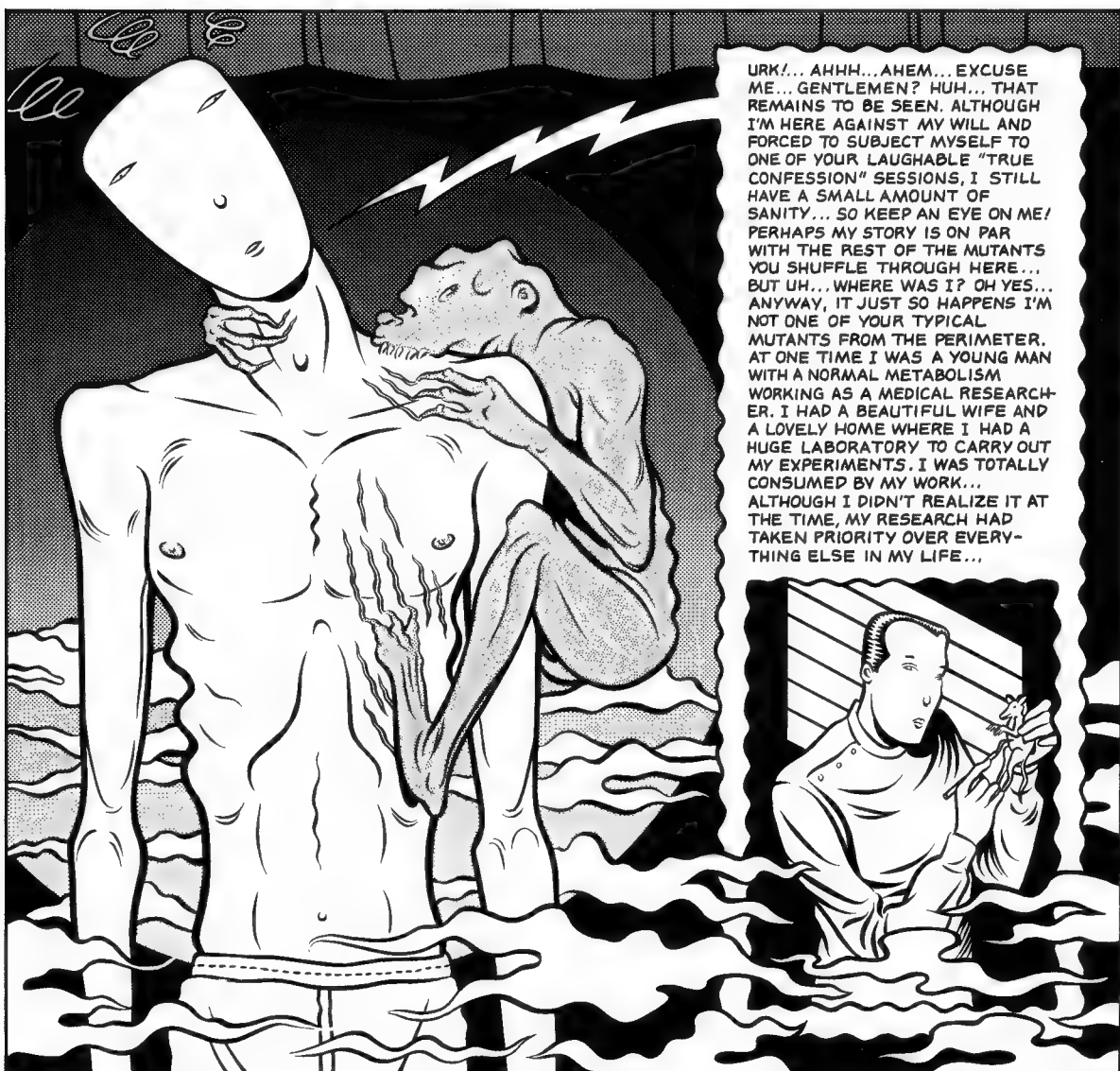
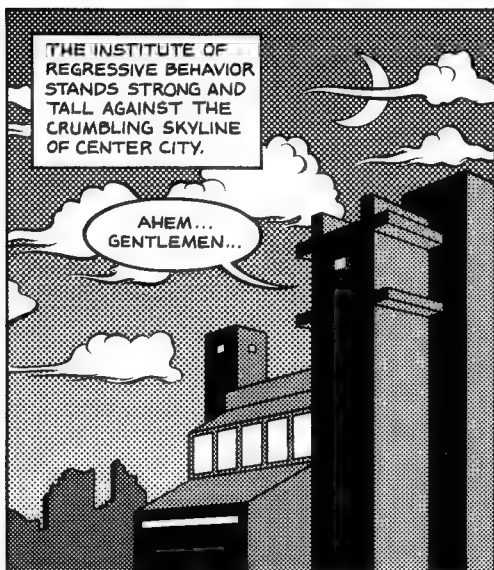


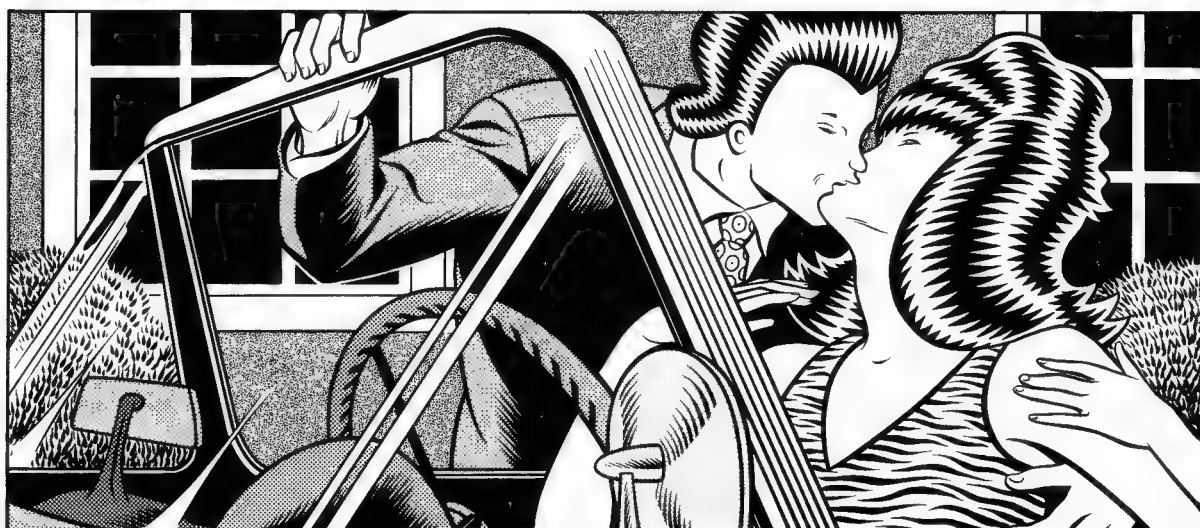
Needless to say, I found my things and left quickly. And now, Dear Diary, I sit with one image in my mind... Rick... Rick holding me in his massive arms telling me everything is OK. I'm all mixed up... Am I in love? Is this as good as it gets?





THE VOICE OF WALKING FLESH

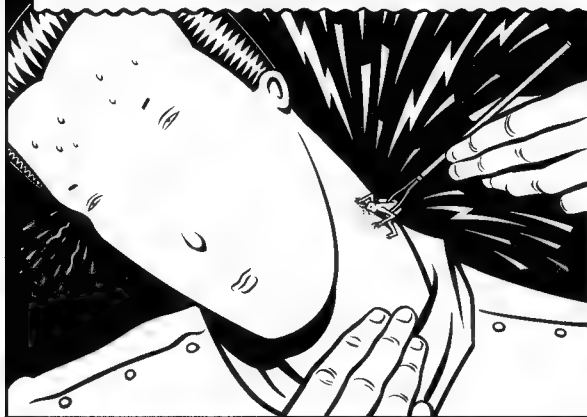




MY HABIT WAS RELATIVELY SMALL IN THOSE DAYS...FOR A FULL EVENING'S WORK I WOULD KEEP THE BEAST ON FOR ABOUT 30 SECONDS...ON THE EVENING THAT MY WIFE LEFT FOR THE PARTY I REMEMBER TAKING AN UNUSUALLY LARGE DOSE...I CHOSE TO IGNORE THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN OF REMOVING THE BEAST...THE



BENEFITS ALWAYS OUTWEIGHED THE PAIN, THE REWARD WAS HOURS OF PERFECT CLARITY... HOURS WHERE I COULD WORK LONGER AND MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN ANY NORMAL HUMAN... MY BODY WAS REDUCED TO A PAINLESS VESSEL THAT OPERATED FLAWLESSLY...THE BEAST MADE ME WHOLE AND PERFECT.



I KNEW CINDY WOULD BE ANGRY WITH ME FOR WORKING SO LATE, SO I CALLED THE BURTONS TO APOLOGIZE.

HI LENA, THIS IS ROGER. I'M SORRY I WASN'T ABLE TO MAKE IT TONIGHT...IS CINDY THERE? I NEED TO TALK WITH HER...

CINDY, WHY I EXPECTED HER TO SHOW UP WITH JIM, BUT THEY NEVER ARRIVED...

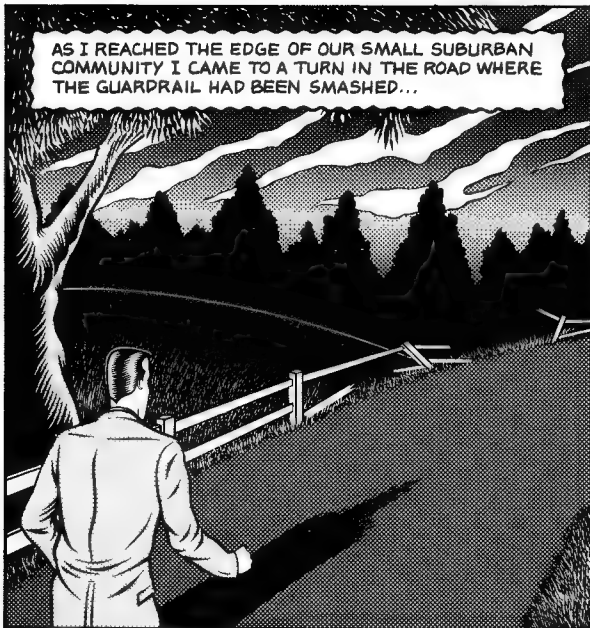
WHAT? ARE YOU SURE?

SURE I'M SURE... I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THEM ALL EVENING.



THE BURTONS LIVED LESS THAN A MILE AWAY...I QUICKLY CHANGED MY CLOTHES AND STARTED RUNNING TOWARDS THEIR HOUSE.

AS I REACHED THE EDGE OF OUR SMALL SUBURBAN COMMUNITY I CAME TO A TURN IN THE ROAD WHERE THE GUARDRAIL HAD BEEN SMASHED...



WITH MY HEART POUNDING IN MY THROAT, I STARTED OVER THE EMBANKMENT... WHAT I SAW CONFIRMED MY WORST FEARS.



OH NO... CINDY... IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS! I WON'T LET IT! I WON'T LET YOU DIE LIKE THIS CINDY!



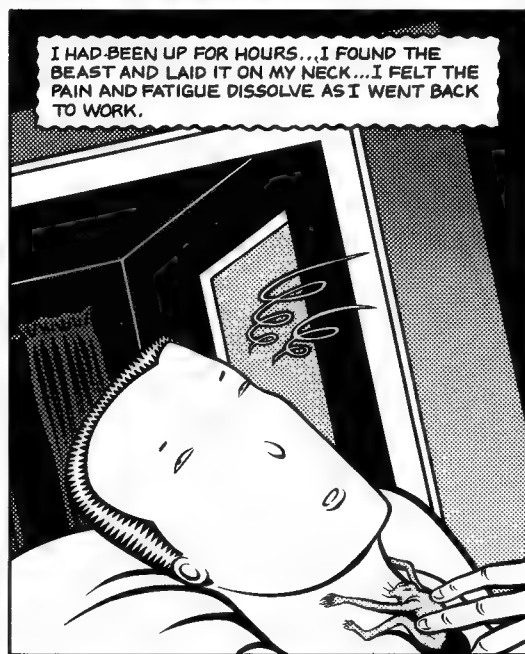
BY THE TIME I REACHED OUR HOUSE MY LUNGS WERE BURNING WITH EXHAUSTION. WITH CINDY'S DAMP SEVERED HEAD IN MY ARMS, I MADE MY WAY BACK TO THE LABORATORY.



AFTER I HAD TAKEN THE MOST RUDIMENTARY STEPS TO FORCE MY WIFE'S HEAD BACK TO LIFE, I FELT MYSELF SLIPPING.



I HAD BEEN UP FOR HOURS...I FOUND THE BEAST AND LAID IT ON MY NECK...I FELT THE PAIN AND FATIGUE DISSOLVE AS I WENT BACK TO WORK.



HOW LONG HAD I BEEN WORKING? I WAS NO LONGER CONCERNED ABOUT MYSELF...MY THOUGHTS WERE FOCUSED ENTIRELY ON MY WIFE.

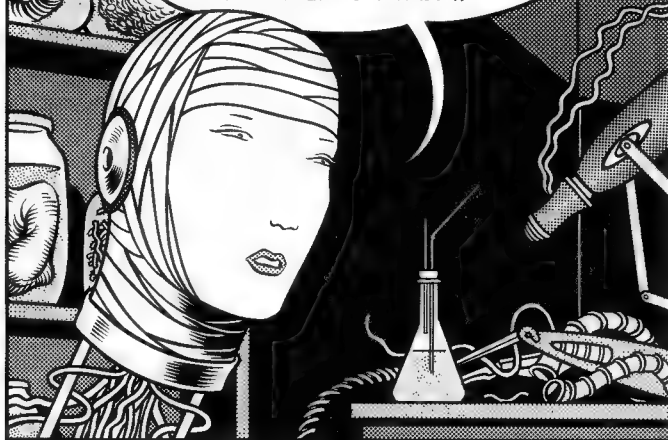


WHEN I WAS DONE I HAD MANAGED TO CREATE A PERFECT ARTIFICIAL BODY FOR MY WIFE'S HEAD...AS I THREW THE FINAL SWITCH, I SAW HER EYELIDS FLUTTER.



HER EYES WERE THICK AND GLASSY WHEN THEY FINALLY OPENED. THE ROOM WAS SILENT EXCEPT FOR THE FAINT HISS OF THE ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATOR. SHE SURVEYED THE ROOM WITH GREAT DELIBERATION BEFORE HER GAZE BECAME FIXED ON ME... SHE BEGAN TO SPEAK IN A DEEP GUTTURAL VOICE...

AHHH...THERE YOU ARE...
I SHOULD HAVE IMAGINED IT WOULD END THIS WAY. ONLY MY DEATH COULD BRING ABOUT A FAINT SIGN OF EMOTION FROM YOU...THIS WHOLE SET-UP FEELS FUNNY...I REALLY NEED A BODY YOU KNOW... AND YOU'LL FIND ONE TO SEW ME ONTO. I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT TOO...WITH THE HELP OF YOUR LITTLE FRIEND. WHEN YOU STARTED DRIFTING AWAY FROM ME I FOUND OUT WHY... I'VE WATCHED YOU WITH THAT LITTLE BEAST AND SAW HOW IT TURNED YOU INTO A WORK MACHINE. IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR JIM I DON'T KNOW HOW I WOULD HAVE SURVIVED. YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT JIM AND I, DID YOU? YOU WERE SO INVOLVED WITH YOURSELF I DON'T KNOW WHAT WOULD HAVE FAZED YOU. NOW THAT I'M ONE OF YOUR EXPERIMENTS I GUESS I MERIT A LITTLE ATTENTION FROM YOU. NOW... IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GET BACK TO WORK ...DO WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO, BUT FIND ME A BODY...I'LL TALK AGAIN LATER...I'M TIRED...



I FOUND MYSELF WALKING IN A STRANGE PART OF THE CITY...I ALMOST DIDN'T RECOGNIZE MY OWN REFLECTION IN A STORE WINDOW...



MY HAIR WAS FALLING OUT...THE BEAST WAS ON MY NECK...IT HAD GROWN AND ITS SKIN WAS PARKER...



I WALKED ON WITH MY WIFE'S WORDS RINGING IN MY EARS...I WAS WALKING THROUGH THE CITY SEARCHING FOR A BODY.



I GUESS WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IS RATHER OBVIOUS... ONE OF YOUR PLAINCLOTHES MEN SPOTTED ME AND TOOK ME IN FOR QUESTIONING AND EVALUATIONS.



I WAS THROWN INTO THE BACK OF A VAN...I OFFERED NO RESISTANCE. AN IMAGE OF A WOMAN'S BODY WITHOUT A HEAD WAS BURNING IN MY MIND.



ONCE I ARRIVED HERE, I WAS STRIPPED TO MY UNDERWEAR AND LED TO A ROOM FOR INTERROGATION.



AFTER WHAT SEEMED LIKE DAYS OF RELENTLESS INTERROGATION I WAS LED THROUGH A MAZE OF HALLWAYS AND LOCKED DOORS TO A ROOM BROKEN UP INTO SMALL CELLS... THE CELLS CONTAINED HUMANS AND ANIMALS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION...



EXCEPT FOR DAILY MEALS THAT WERE SHOWN THROUGH THE BARS AND AN OCCASIONAL OUTBURST FROM ONE OF THE OTHER PRISONERS, I WAS LEFT ALONE WITH MY THOUGHTS... VISIONS OF CINDY'S HEAD... ALL OF THE BODIES WALKING FREE ON THE STREETS... WITH HER INSIDE... HELPLESS.



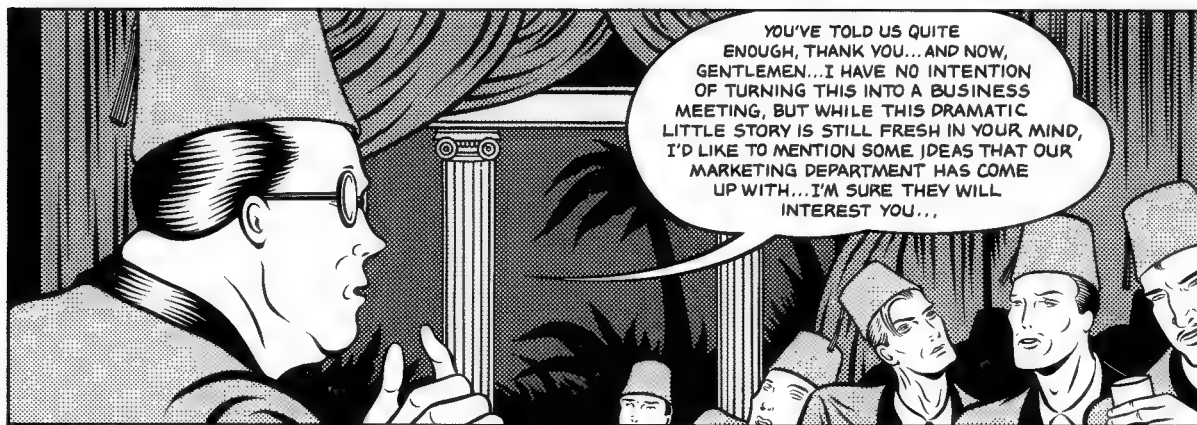


NOW THAT I'VE BROUGHT YOU UP TO DATE I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING...I WANT TO SHOW YOU WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE BEAST IS REMOVED...

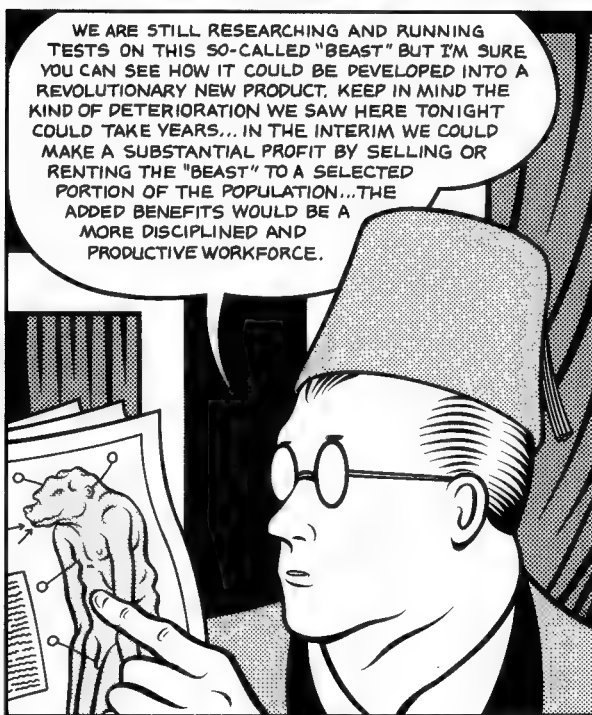


BEFORE HE CAN ACT, TWO SECURITY GUARDS OVERPOWER HIM AND DRAG HIM FROM THE STAGE.

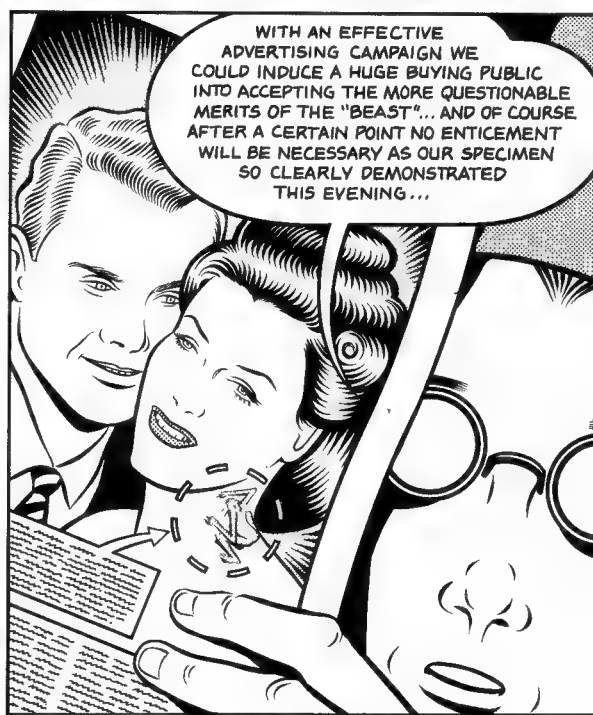
NO...UH, WAIT! I'M NOT DONE...I...



YOU'VE TOLD US QUITE ENOUGH, THANK YOU... AND NOW, GENTLEMEN...I HAVE NO INTENTION OF TURNING THIS INTO A BUSINESS MEETING, BUT WHILE THIS DRAMATIC LITTLE STORY IS STILL FRESH IN YOUR MIND, I'D LIKE TO MENTION SOME IDEAS THAT OUR MARKETING DEPARTMENT HAS COME UP WITH...I'M SURE THEY WILL INTEREST YOU...



WE ARE STILL RESEARCHING AND RUNNING TESTS ON THIS SO-CALLED "BEAST" BUT I'M SURE YOU CAN SEE HOW IT COULD BE DEVELOPED INTO A REVOLUTIONARY NEW PRODUCT. KEEP IN MIND THE KIND OF DETERIORATION WE SAW HERE TONIGHT COULD TAKE YEARS...IN THE INTERIM WE COULD MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL PROFIT BY SELLING OR RENTING THE "BEAST" TO A SELECTED PORTION OF THE POPULATION...THE ADDED BENEFITS WOULD BE A MORE DISCIPLINED AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE.



WITH AN EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN WE COULD INDUCE A HUGE BUYING PUBLIC INTO ACCEPTING THE MORE QUESTIONABLE MERITS OF THE "BEAST"...AND OF COURSE AFTER A CERTAIN POINT NO ENTICEMENT WILL BE NECESSARY AS OUR SPECIMEN SO CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THIS EVENING...

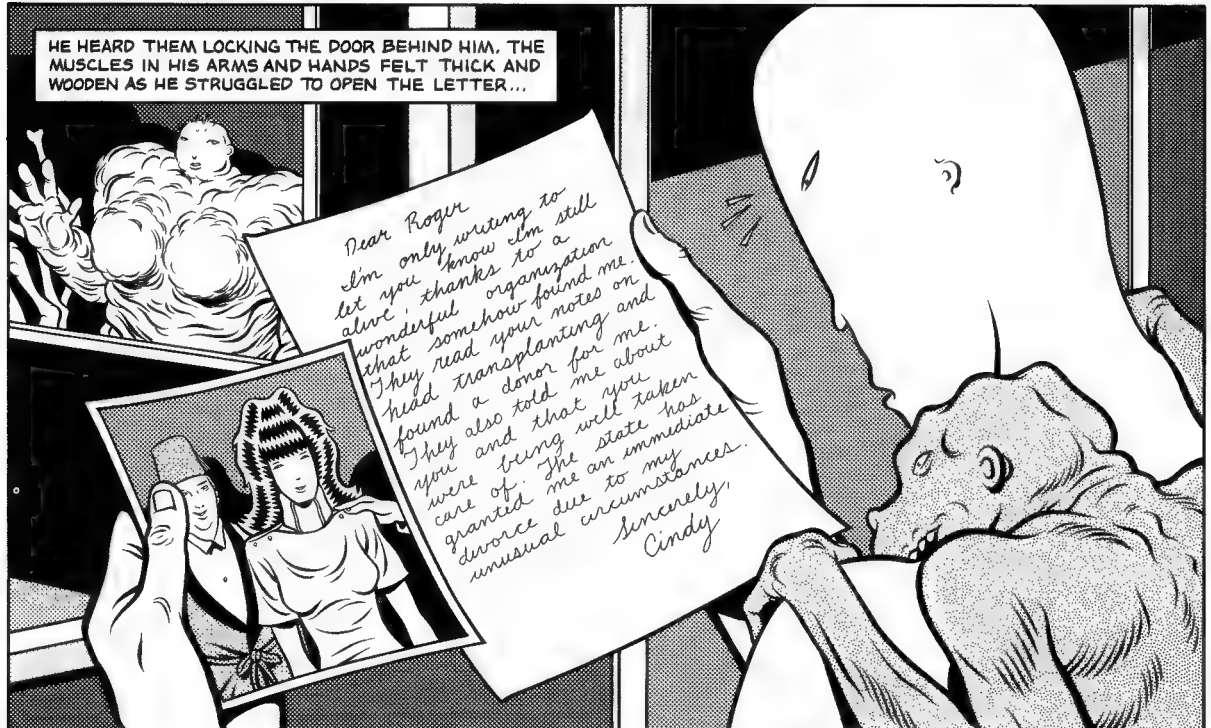


#023 IS LED DOWN THE CORRIDOR TOWARDS HIS CELL... THE SOUNDS FROM THE BANQUET HALL ARE STILL AUDIBLE.



HOLD IT A MOMENT. YOU'RE #023? I'VE GOT A REGISTERED LETTER FOR YOU... YOU'LL HAVE TO SIGN.

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND...



HE HEARD THEM LOCKING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. THE MUSCLES IN HIS ARMS AND HANDS FELT THICK AND WOODEN AS HE STRUGGLED TO OPEN THE LETTER...

Dear Roger
I'm only writing to let you know I'm still alive, thanks to a wonderful organization that somehow found me. They read your notes on head transplanting and found a donor for me. They also told me about you and that you were being well taken care of. The state has granted me an immediate divorce due to my unusual circumstances.
Sincerely,
Cindy



HOURS LATER... THE BEAST PACES THE LENGTH OF THE CELL... WAITING FOR A NEW BODY.

THE END.

MY MIND WAS REELING AS JOHN OPENED THE DOOR TO OUR NEW HOME. HAD I REALLY JUST BEEN MARRIED? WAS I REALLY MRS. JOHN DOUGH? JOHN WAS THE BOY FOR WHOM I HAD WAITED AN ETERNITY. THOUSANDS OF MILES AND A WORLD WAR HAD SEPARATED US, BUT NEVER ONCE HAD I LOST FAITH IN OUR LOVE... NOW AS I ENTERED OUR LOVELY NEW HOME, HOW COULD I KNOW THAT I WAS ALSO ENTERING...

A MARRIAGE made in HELL



MY BEDROOM? WAS THIS SOME SORT OF CRUEL JOKE? AFTER ALL OF MY WAITING, WOULD MY NEED FOR COMPANIONSHIP BE DENIED ME?... I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THERE WOULD BE A FLAW IN THE PERFECT PICTURE I HAD PAINTED OF OUR MARRIAGE... I TRIED TO BE STRONG, BUT THE HOT STREAM OF TEARS FLOWING DOWN MY CHEEKS BETRAYED MY TRUE EMOTIONS...



PLEASE DON'T CRY HONEY... YOU MEAN THE WORLD TO ME AND I'D NEVER DO ANYTHING TO HURT YOU... BUT... BUT I'M NOT THE SAME MAN YOU KNEW BEFORE THE WAR...



DURING AN ENEMY SNEAK ATTACK IN THE PACIFIC I HAD THE MISFORTUNE OF BEING NEAR A FUEL STORAGE TANK THAT EXPLODED... WHEN I WOKE UP IN THE VETERANS' HOSPITAL I FOUND I HAD BEEN IN A COMA FOR EIGHTEEN MONTHS...



IN THE EXPLOSION I SUSTAINED THIRD DEGREE BURNS ON ALMOST HALF OF MY BODY... WITH SKIN GRAFTS AND PLASTIC SURGERY THEY WERE ABLE TO PUT ME BACK TOGETHER AGAIN...



SO... I HOPE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHY I'M A LITTLE RELUCTANT TO BE... UH... INTIMATE WITH YOU YET... THE DOCTORS SAY IT WILL TAKE TIME TO ADJUST TO MY NEW BODY...



THAT NIGHT AS I LAY IN BED I KEPT THINKING ABOUT THE HORRIBLE ORDEAL MY HUSBAND HAD BEEN THROUGH...



HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO SELFISH?... THINKING ONLY OF MY SOB & CARNAL DESIRES...



WHEN JOHN AND I GAVE OUR WEDDING VOWS, I PROMISED TO LOVE, HONOR, AND CHERISH MY HUSBAND AND I WAS DETERMINED TO KEEP THAT PROMISE! AFTER JOHN LEFT FOR WORK I GOT DOWN TO THE TASK OF TURNING OUR HOUSE INTO A HOME... A HOME WHERE OUR LOVE COULD GROW AND WHERE JOHN COULD FORGET ABOUT THE MISFORTUNES OF THE PAST...



CLEANLINESS MIGHT BE NEXT TO GODLINESS, BUT ALL I WANT IS TO BE NEXT TO JOHN!





THAT EVENING AS WE SAT DOWN TO DINNER, WE WERE LIKE STRANGERS... OUR CONVERSATION SOUNDED LIKE LINES FROM A CHEAP PAPERBACK NOVEL.

GEE HONEY, THIS IS A GREAT MEAL...

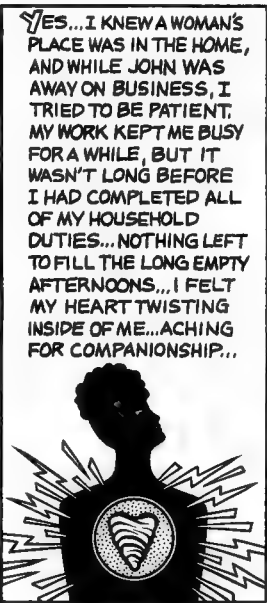


OH, BY THE WAY, I JUST FOUND OUT I'LL BE AWAY FOR A FEW DAYS... THERE'S A BUYERS CONVENTION THIS TUESDAY...

THAT'S TOO BAD... I'LL MISS YOU.



WELL, YOU KNEW WHAT YOU WERE GETTING INTO WHEN YOU MARRIED A SALESMAN.



YES... I KNEW A WOMAN'S PLACE WAS IN THE HOME, AND WHILE JOHN WAS AWAY ON BUSINESS, I TRIED TO BE PATIENT. MY WORK KEPT ME BUSY FOR A WHILE, BUT IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I HAD COMPLETED ALL OF MY HOUSEHOLD DUTIES... NOTHING LEFT TO FILL THE LONG EMPTY AFTERNOONS... I FELT MY HEART TWISTING INSIDE OF ME... ACHING FOR COMPANIONSHIP...



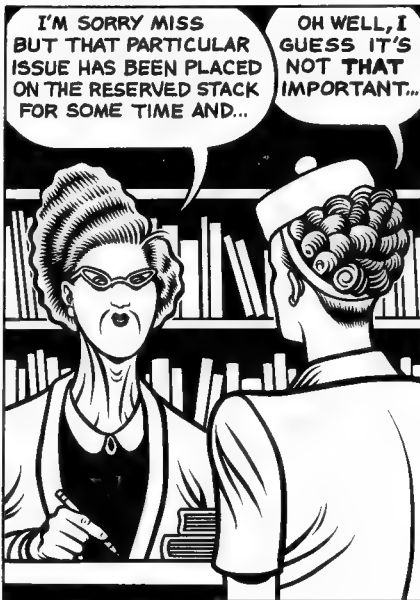
MAYBE JOHN'S STUDY NEEDS DUSTING AGAIN... HMMM... I HAVEN'T NOTICED THESE MAGAZINES BEFORE...



WELL, HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT! THESE PAGES HAVE BEEN TORN OUT! I JUST HAVE TO FIND OUT HOW THIS STORY ON JOPO THE BABY GORILLA ENDS...



I CHANGED MY CLOTHES AND WALKED DOWN TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY... FOR THE MARCH 1944 ISSUE OF "LIVE."

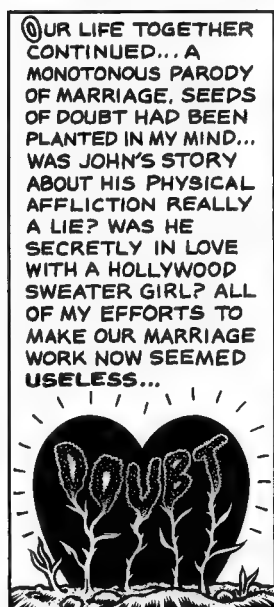


I'M SORRY MISS BUT THAT PARTICULAR ISSUE HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE RESERVED STACK FOR SOME TIME AND...

OH WELL, I GUESS IT'S NOT THAT IMPORTANT...



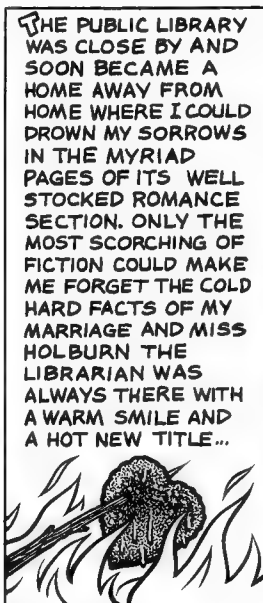
BUT GOODNESS, NO ONE EVER DID CLAIM IT. I DON'T SEE WHY YOU CAN'T READ IT HERE...



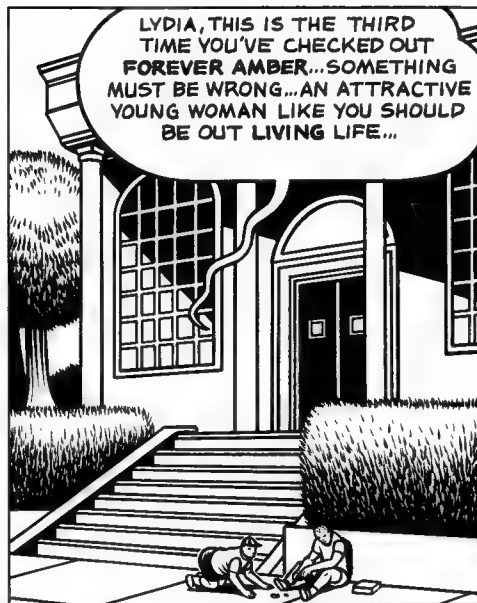


JOHN CONTINUED TO TAKE HIS LONG SALES TRIPS.

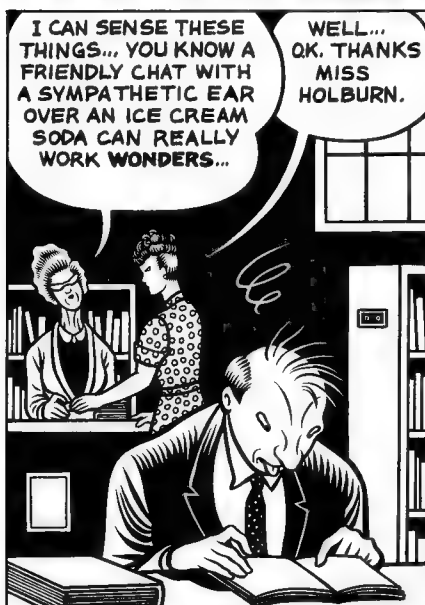
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANY LONGER! IF I DON'T GET OUT OF THIS HOUSE I'LL GO CRAZY!



THE PUBLIC LIBRARY WAS CLOSE BY AND SOON BECAME A HOME AWAY FROM HOME WHERE I COULD DROWN MY SORROWS IN THE MYRIAD PAGES OF ITS WELL STOCKED ROMANCE SECTION. ONLY THE MOST SCORCHING OF FICTION COULD MAKE ME FORGET THE COLD HARD FACTS OF MY MARRIAGE AND MISS HOLBURN THE LIBRARIAN WAS ALWAYS THERE WITH A WARM SMILE AND A HOT NEW TITLE...



LYDIA, THIS IS THE THIRD TIME YOU'VE CHECKED OUT FOREVER AMBER... SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG... AN ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN LIKE YOU SHOULD BE OUT LIVING LIFE...



I CAN SENSE THESE THINGS... YOU KNOW A FRIENDLY CHAT WITH A SYMPATHETIC EAR OVER AN ICE CREAM SODA CAN REALLY WORK WONDERS...

WELL... OK. THANKS MISS HOLBURN.



LATER...

I THOUGHT WE COULD DO A LITTLE WINDOW SHOPPING FIRST, LYDIA.

YOU KNOW MISS HOLBURN, EXCEPT FOR MY HOUSE AND YOUR READING ROOM I REALLY HAVEN'T SEEN MUCH OF THIS TOWN.



THIS WAS THE MOST FUN I'VE HAD IN YEARS! THAT LINGERIE SHOP HAD SUCH PRETTY THINGS... I JUST WISH I HAD SOME INCENTIVE TO VISIT IT MORE OFTEN...



WE WENT TO AN ICE CREAM PARLOR AND TOOK A QUIET CORNER BOOTH WHERE I Poured OUT MY WHOLE SORDID STORY TO MISS HOLBURN.

LYDIA... I KNOW THINGS HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT, BUT YOU JUST CAN'T GIVE UP! YOU'RE TOO FULL OF LIFE TO LET YOUR HUSBAND DESTROY YOU!



WELL... TO TELL THE TRUTH I'M NOT POSITIVE THAT HE'S SEEING THIS OTHER WOMAN, BUT HE... UHH...



LYDIA! WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE JUST SEEN A GHOST!



WHEN I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS I FELT A TERRIBLE THROBBING PAIN IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD...



I FOUND MYSELF IN A VERY UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION.



SOMEONE ELSE WAS IN THE ROOM WITH ME...IT WAS THAT WOMAN! THE WOMAN IN ALL OF MY HUSBAND'S PHOTOGRAPHS!



YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND? I'LL GIVE YOU PLENTY TO WORRY ABOUT BEFORE THE NIGHT'S THROUGH! NOW...LET ME TELL YOU A STORY... A TRUE STORY...



THE STORY IS ABOUT A HOLLYWOOD GLAMOUR GIRL WHO DID HER PART FOR THE WAR EFFORT BY ENTERTAINING G.I.'S IN THE PACIFIC...



DURING THE LONG TOURS SHE GOT INTO THE HABIT OF ENTERTAINING THE TROOPS IN A MORE INTIMATE MANNER...



ONE OF THE LUCKY G.I.'S WAS CALLED JOHN DOUGH...



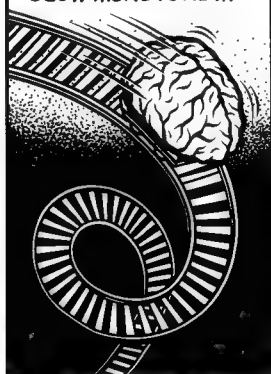
WAIT A MINUTE! YOUR VOICE! IT...IT SOUNDS SO FAMILIAR!



PERHAPS A FEW OF YOUR QUESTIONS COULD BE ANSWERED IF YOU TOOK A CLOSER LOOK AT ME...



I WAS SPEECHLESS WITH HORROR! I FELT LIKE MY BRAIN WAS ON A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE TO OBLIVION! WHEN I GATHERED MY SENSES, I HEARD JOHN CONTINUING HIS STORY IN A SLOW MONOTONE...



...SO ANYWAY, ONE EVENING THIS GLAMOUR GIRL WAS IN THE ARMS OF YOUR DEAREST BELOVED WHEN ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE!



THE NEXT DAY TWO BODIES WERE FOUND IN THE DEBRIS...

THEY'RE BURNED TO A CRISP...JE-ZUS H. CHRIST! THIS ONE'S STILL ALIVE! THE NAME ON HIS TAG IS JOHN DOUGH!



THE SURVIVING BODY WAS SHIPPED TO A VETERANS' HOSPITAL WHERE DOCTORS STARTED FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION AND SKIN GRAFTS...



EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER JOHN DOUGH JOINED THE LIVING AGAIN...



A FEW THINGS WERE OUT OF PLACE...



THE LAST THING THAT I REMEMBER BEFORE BEING KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS BY THE BLAST WAS CLINGING TO JOHN'S DOGTAGS...BECAUSE OF MISTAKEN IDENTIFICATION I WAS A WOMAN TRAPPED IN THE BODY OF A MAN...



I FINALLY REALIZED THE ONLY WAY I'D BE RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL WOULD BE TO PLAY ALONG WITH THEM...

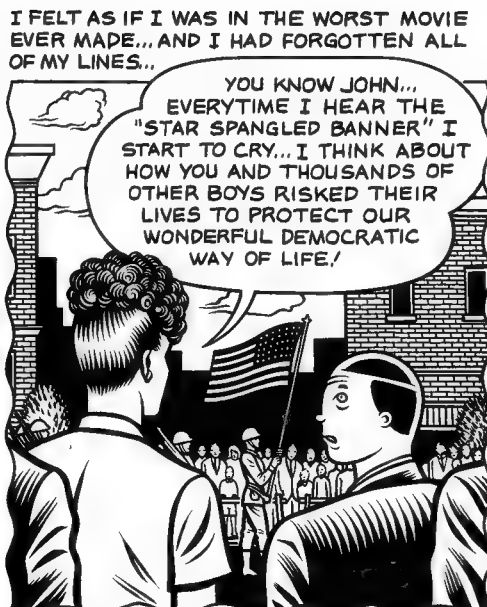


I GUESS I REALLY WAS A LITTLE CRAZY... FOR A WHILE THERE I CONVINCED MYSELF I'D BE ABLE TO LEAD A NORMAL LIFE... AS A MAN!





BACK WHEN I WAS ACTING IN ALL OF THOSE LOW-BUDGET HOLLYWOOD FILMS, I PLAYED WOMEN EXACTLY LIKE YOU... TRUE-BLUE, ALL-AMERICAN, WAITING AT HOME WITH AN APPLE PIE... BUT YOU, YOU WEREN'T ACTING! I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT!



I FELT AS IF I WAS IN THE WORST MOVIE EVER MADE... AND I HAD FORGOTTEN ALL OF MY LINES...

YOU KNOW JOHN... EVERYTIME I HEAR THE "STAR SPANGLED BANNER" I START TO CRY... I THINK ABOUT HOW YOU AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER BOYS RISKED THEIR LIVES TO PROTECT OUR WONDERFUL DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE!



AFTER ALL I HAD BEEN THROUGH, MY BRAIN FELT COOKED... I WAS SO FAR GONE THAT MARRIAGE SEEMED LIKE THE MOST REASONABLE THING TO DO AT THE TIME.

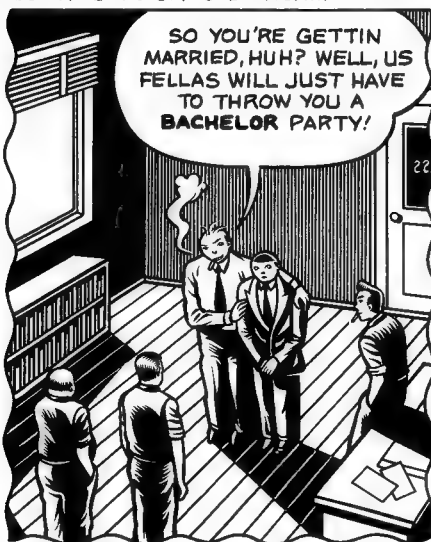
...AND THESE ARE THE GOWNS I'VE PICKED OUT FOR THE BRIDESMAIDS! WHAT DO YOU THINK?

UH...GEE, THEY LOOK REALLY GREAT, HONEY.

LUCKILY JOHN DOUGH DIDN'T HAVE MUCH OF A PERSONALITY... I HAD NO TROUBLE GETTING HIS OLD JOB BACK...

AT FIRST IT WAS ALMOST INTERESTING TO SEE HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVED...

...BUT IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE MY INTEREST TURNED TO CONTEMPT...



SO YOU'RE GETTIN MARRIED, HUH? WELL, US FELLAS WILL JUST HAVE TO THROW YOU A BACHELOR PARTY!



OH, MAMA! YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES!

BOY... I WOULDN'T KICK HER OUT OF BED!



NOW LEMME TELL YOU ONE THING ABOUT WOMEN... YOU GOTTA LET 'EM KNOW WHO'S BOSS... EVEN IF IT MEANS SMACKING 'EM AROUND A LITTLE...

SOON AFTER WE WERE MARRIED IT BECAME CLEAR THAT MY IMPERSONATION OF JOHN DOUGH WASN'T WORKING...

...SO I STARTED LIVING TWO LIVES... MY "BUSINESS TRIPS" MADE IT EASY!

I EVEN RENTED THIS HOUSE SO I COULD INDULGE MYSELF IN MY FANTASIES...



IT'S FOR MY WIFE.



THIS IS FOR MY WIFE, BUT DO YOU MIND IF I TRY IT ON?



BUT NOW IT'S ALL OVER, ISN'T IT? YOU HAD TO FOLLOW ME HERE, DIDN'T YOU?

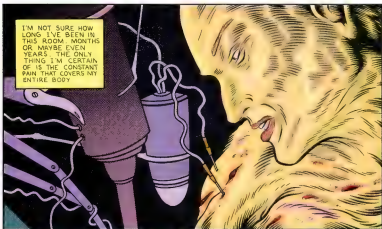


ILL BRED

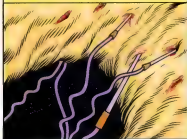
A HORROR ROMANCE
BY CHARLES BURNS



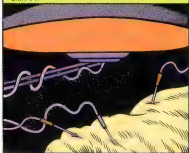
I'M NOT SURE HOW LONG I'VE BEEN IN THIS ROOM. MONTHS OR MAYBE EVEN YEARS. THE ONLY THING I'M CERTAIN OF IS THE CONSTANT PAIN THAT COVERS MY ENTIRE BODY.



I'M IMMOBILE... MY MUSCLES HAVE WITHERED AND BEEN REPLACED BY ROLLS OF FAT... CRUDELY FITTED TUBES ARE ATTACHED TO VARIOUS PARTS OF MY BODY TO FEED ME AND TAKE AWAY MY WASTES.



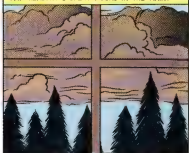
THE ONLY LIGHT IN THE ROOM IS THE SOFT ORANGE GLOW GIVEN OFF BY THE THERMAL LAMPS.



...AND THE WHITE LIGHT OF A SMALL WINDOW AT THE FAR END OF THE ROOM.



I CAN TELL THAT IT'S RAINING OUTSIDE. IT'S ALWAYS RAINING. WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND HEALTHY I SPENT HOURS IN THE RAIN.



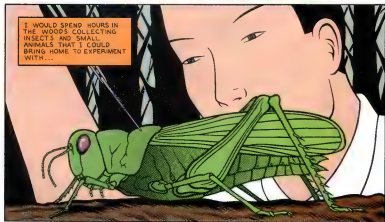
MY STORY STARTS WHEN I WAS YOUNG... LIKE SO MANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO GREW UP IN THE 1950'S, I WAS ENCOURAGED TO TAKE AN INTEREST IN SCIENCE.



MY FATHER BOUGHT ME A CHEMISTRY SET AND A SMALL MICROSCOPE FOR CHRISTMAS ONE YEAR...



I WOULD SPEND HOURS IN THE WOODS COLLECTING INSECTS AND SMALL ANIMALS THAT I COULD BRING HOME TO EXPERIMENT WITH...



ONE AFTERNOON I WAS OUT EXPLORING IN THE WOODS AND CAME ACROSS A NEST BUILT IN THE CROTCH OF A TREE. AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS MANMADE ... SOME FORM OF TREE SURGERY. THERE WAS A SMALL HOLE ON THE TOP AND I COULD JUST MAKE OUT A TINY BLACK FIGURE MOVING INSIDE...



WITH A LONG PAIR OF TWEEZERS I WAS ABLE TO REACH INSIDE AND AFTER A FEW ATTEMPTS I PULLED OUT THE INSECT...



... BUT IT LOOKED LIKE NO INSECT I HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE. IT HAD A HARD BLACK SHELL AND ITS LONG ARMS AND THE SHAPE OF ITS SLENDER TORSO LOOKED ALMOST HUMAN.

AFTER PLACING THE INSECT IN A SPECIMEN JAR, I RETURNED HOME TO EXAMINE IT.



MY PARENTS DIDN'T LIKE ME TO KEEP LIVE ANIMALS IN THE HOUSE SO I HAD TO HIDE IT UNTIL I WAS IN MY BEDROOM.



WHEN I WAS CALLED DOWN TO DINNER, I HID THE JAR UNDER MY BED...



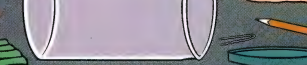
I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN, MOM!

WELL...TELL US WHAT YOU DID TODAY RON...

OH... NOTHING.



AFTER, EXCUSING MYSELF FROM THE DINNER TABLE, I WENT BACK TO MY ROOM AND LOOKED UNDER MY BED FOR THE JAR...

A person is lying on their side on a dark, textured floor. Their head is resting on their hand, and they are looking down at a clear glass jar that is lying on its side next to them. The person is wearing a white shirt and blue pants. A green pencil and a blue eraser are also visible on the floor near the jar.

...ONLY TO FIND IT OPEN... THE INSECT HAD ESCAPED!

OH NO!

LATE THAT EVENING, JUST AS I WAS ABOUT TO FALL ASLEEP, I HEARD A FAINT SCRATCHING SOUND... IT WAS COMING FROM INSIDE THE BED.

I SLEPT IN THAT SAME BED FOR YEARS, AND PERIODICALLY WOULD HEAR SOMETHING MOVING AND SCRATCHING... SOMETHING INSIDE THE BED...

A man with dark hair, wearing a green patterned shirt, sits up in bed under a purple blanket. He has a wide-eyed, startled expression. A lamp with an orange shade is visible behind him. The background consists of brown curtains and a textured wall. Various sound effects are scattered around the bed: "TIC" appears multiple times in red, "BBBZZZZZ" in yellow at the top left, and "NNNNNNNZZZZZZZZ" in yellow along the bottom edge of the blanket.

I SLEPT IN THAT SAME BED UNTIL I WENT AWAY TO COLLEGE. I LIVED FOR A FEW YEARS IN DORMITORIES AND FURNISHED APARTMENTS UNTIL I FOUND A SMALL UNFURNISHED HOUSE NEAR SCHOOL.

I MOVED THAT BED, ALONG WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER SMALL PIECES OF FURNITURE INTO MY HOUSE. THE HOUSE WASN'T LUXURIOUS BUT IT WAS QUIET AND COMFORTABLE.



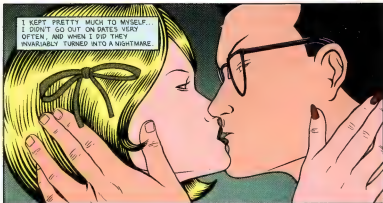
I WAS A JUNIOR IN COLLEGE THAT YEAR AND I DECLARED BIOLOGY AS MY MAJOR...HAVING NO ROOMMATES OR DISTRACTIONS MADE MY NEW HOUSE A PERFECT PLACE TO STUDY.



I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME IN THE LIBRARY OR AT HOME STUDYING. I DIDN'T HAVE VERY MUCH IN COMMON WITH OTHER STUDENTS WHO ALWAYS SEEMED TO BE TALKING ABOUT A WILD PARTY OR SOME BORING SPORTS EVENT.



I KEPT PRETTY MUCH TO MYSELF... I DIDN'T GO OUT ON DATES VERY OFTEN, AND WHEN I DID THEY INVARIABLY TURNED INTO A NIGHTMARE.



IT WAS A DARK, RAINY DAY IN THE MIDDLE OF JANUARY AND I WAS GOING OVER MY NOTES FOR AN UPCOMING EXAM IN MY MICROBIOLOGY CLASS WHEN I FIRST MET SHEILA.



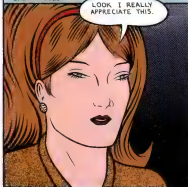
HI... I'VE SEEN YOU IN SMITHSON'S BIOLOGY 300 CLASS... DO YOU HAVE A SECOND?

OH... UH SURE.



I WAS DISAPPOINTED WHEN I FOUND SHE ONLY WANTED TO COPY SOME NOTES FROM A CLASS SHE MISSED.

LOOK, I REALLY APPRECIATE THIS.



I LOOKED UP HER TELEPHONE NUMBER IN THE STUDENT DIRECTORY AND SOMEHOW GOT UP ENOUGH NERVE TO CALL HER UP AND ASK HER OUT ON A DATE.

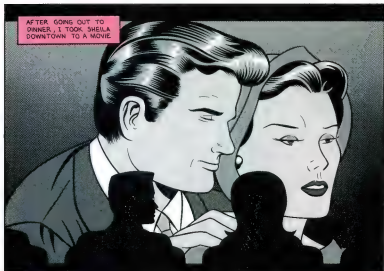
HI, SHEILA? THIS IS RON... AND... UH...



TO MY SURPRISE, SHE NOT ONLY ACCEPTED, BUT SEEMED TO BE AS EXCITED AND ANXIOUS AS I WAS.



AFTER GOING OUT TO DINNER, I TOOK SHEILA DOWNTOWN TO A MOVIE.



THAT WAS ONE OF THE BEST SHOWS I'VE SEEN FOR YEARS. I'M REALLY NOT TIRED YET... DO YOU WANT TO STOP SOMEWHERE FOR A DRINK?

THAT SOUNDS FINE.



I WASN'T USED TO GOING TO BARS OR DRINKING, BUT I DIDN'T WANT SHEILA TO THINK I WAS A SQUARE...



SHEILA ORDERED MARTINIS FOR BOTH OF US... I COULD FEEL THE ALCOHOL GOING TO MY HEAD IMMEDIATELY.

LET'S HAVE ANOTHER.

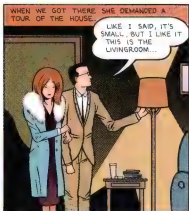




AS WE SAT AND TALKED, I NOTICED SHEILA WAS BECOMING INTOXICATED... SHE MOVED CLOSER TO ME AND WAS ACTING MORE AFFECTIONATE.



IT WAS AS IF I WAS BEING SWEEPED ALONG THROUGH A DREAM THAT I HAD NO CONTROL OVER... I HEARD MYSELF SAY YES WHEN SHE ASKED TO SEE MY HOUSE.



WHEN WE GOT THERE SHE DEMANDED A TOUR OF THE HOUSE.

LIKE I SAID, IT'S SMALL, BUT I LIKE IT THIS IS THE LIVINGROOM...

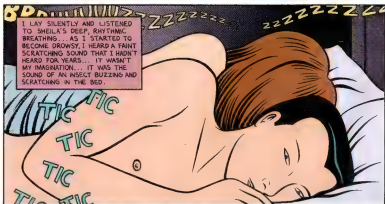


... AND HERE'S MY BEDROOM.

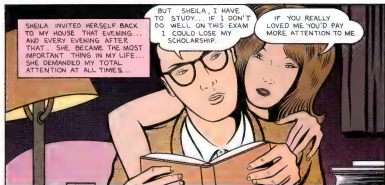
OOOHHH!



OH LOOK AT THIS ANTIQUE BED... IT'S BEAUTIFUL!



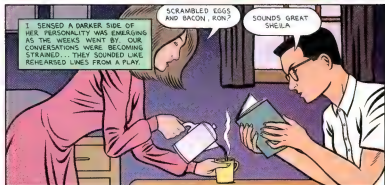




SHEILA INVITED HERSELF BACK TO MY HOUSE THAT EVENING... AND EVERY EVENING AFTER THAT. SHE BECAME THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN MY LIFE... SHE DEMANDED MY TOTAL ATTENTION AT ALL TIMES...

BUT SHEILA, I HAVE TO STUDY... IF I DON'T DO WELL ON THIS EXAM I COULD LOSE MY SCHOLARSHIP.

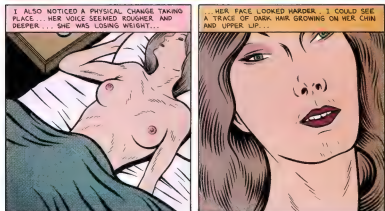
IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME YOU'D PAY MORE ATTENTION TO ME.



I SENSED A DARKER SIDE OF HER PERSONALITY WAS EMERGING AS THE WEEKS WENT BY. OUR CONVERSATIONS WERE BECOMING STRAINED... THEY SOUNDED LIKE REHEARSED LINES FROM A PLAY.

SCRAMBLED EGGS AND BACON, RON?

SOUNDS GREAT SHEILA



I ALSO NOTICED A PHYSICAL CHANGE TAKING PLACE... HER VOICE SEEMED ROUGHER AND DEEPER... SHE WAS LOSING WEIGHT...

...HER FACE LOOKED HARDER... I COULD SEE A TRACE OF DARK HAIR GROWING ON HER CHIN AND UPPER LIP...



IT HAD BEEN OVER A MONTH SINCE THAT FIRST EVENING I SPENT WITH SHEILA, AND I NOTICED SHE STILL HAD HER WRIST BANGED. WHEN I QUESTIONED HER ABOUT IT SHE ANSWERED WITH HESITATION.

IT'S FINE... REALLY... I WENT TO A DOCTOR AND IT SHOULD BE BETTER SOON.

I REALIZED HER MUSCLES WERE GETTING LARGER AND MORE DEFINED... SHE WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE AND POWERFUL... IT WAS FRIGHTENING... AND STRANGELY APPEALING.



ONE EVENING I WAS LOOKING AT THE BANDAGE ON HER ARM AND NOTICED A LARGE LUMP IN THE CENTER... AS I WATCHED IT I THOUGHT I SAW IT MOVE SLIGHTLY.



I GUESS THE REAL TURNING POINT WAS WHEN I CAME HOME FROM SCHOOL ONE DAY AND SHE HAD CUT OFF ALL OF HER BEAUTIFUL HAIR. IT WAS THEN THAT I FORCED MYSELF TO REALIZE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE CHANGE TAKING PLACE IN HER BODY... AND HER MIND.



I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE HAIRCUT. I HAD SOME GROCERIES FOR DINNER, SO I CARRIED THEM TO THE KITCHEN AND STARTED TO CUT UP SOME VEGETABLES... WITH MY MIND ON SHEILA, I WAS CARELESS AND CUT MYSELF BADLY...



I DIDN'T HEAR SHEILA COMING UP BEHIND ME, BUT WHEN I TURNED AROUND, SHE WAS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY... SHE WAS UNWRAPPING THE BANDAGE ON HER WRIST...



WITH ONE QUICK MOVEMENT SHE GRABBED MY CUT HAND AND PUSHED THE HORRIBLE SHARP APPENDAGE ON HER WRIST INTO MY WOUND... THERE WAS A TERRIBLE SEARING PAIN AND THEN I LOST CONSCIOUSNESS...





WHEN I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS I FOUND MYSELF TIGHTLY BOUND TO MY BED... I FELT NAUSEOUS AND THE PAIN IN MY HAND WAS ALMOST UNBEARABLE. IT LOOKED LIKE THE WOUND HAD BEEN CLEANED, BUT IT WAS SWOLLEN AND INFLAMED...



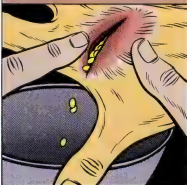
I LAY MOTIONLESS FOR HOURS... AT LAST SHEILA OPENED THE DOOR... HER EYES LOOKED DISTANT AND CLOUDED OVER... THERE WAS A TERRIBLE SMILE ON HER FACE.

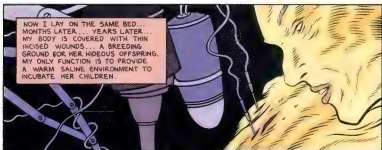


WITHOUT A WORD, SHE CAME OVER TO THE BED TO EXAMINE MY HAND...



SHE SQUEEZED THE WOUND OVER A WHITE PORCELAIN BOWL, AND I WATCHED IN HORROR AS A NUMBER OF SMALL, YELLOW EGGS DROPPED OUT. I MUST HAVE PASSED OUT FROM THE PAIN...





IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME DREAM...I'M IN A DARK SMOKY ROOM AND THE MUSIC IS PLAYING SOFT AND SLOW...I'M HOLDING LINDA, WATCHING HER SMILE UP AT ME, AND THEN HER EXPRESSION CHANGES...SUDDENLY I REALIZE SOMETHING'S WRONG...**TERRIBLY** WRONG! I FEEL ROTTEN...I **AM** ROTTEN! **DECAYING!** LITERALLY **FALLING APART!** AND...AND EVERYONE'S JUST STANDING THERE **STARING**, AFRAID TO GET TOO CLOSE, BECAUSE WHAT I HAVE IS...

CONTAGIOUS



AS USUAL IT'S THE PAIN THAT WAKES ME UP... LIKE A WHITE HOT NAIL BEING DRIVEN INTO THE BACK OF MY SKULL...



PART OF THE DREAM STICKS WITH ME...LINDA'S FACE...WELL, NOT HER FACE EXACTLY...MORE LIKE A FADING IMPRESSION OF HER...HEAVY MAKEUP, THICK BLACK HAIR...AN INDISTINCT ODOR...



I MAKE IT TO THE BATHROOM AND TOSS DOWN SOME ASPIRIN... THEY DON'T DO MUCH GOOD, I GUESS I COULD TRY TO FIND SOMETHING STRONGER, BUT I DON'T KNOW ANY DRUGGIES...



THAT'S WHERE I GOT THIS STUFF...EVERY DAY IT'S GETTIN' WORSE, CREEPING UP TOWARDS MY FACE...WHEN IT REACHS MY FACE...



UGH...FOOD STINKS...THIS STUFF REALLY KILLS YOUR APPETITE...I REALLY SHOULD EAT 'CAUSE HEY, I'M A GROWING BOY...



ALL MY FRIENDS ARE PRETTY STRAIGHT...EXCEPT MAYBE PAUL...HE'S THE ONE WHO TALKED ME INTO GOING TO THAT PARTY...



THE PARTY WAS WILD...I DIDN'T KNOW MANY OF THE KIDS...THEY WERE ALL FROM ST. JOE'S, THE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL PAUL GOES TO...



GROWING INTO WHAT? SOMEHOW I GOT PAIRED UP WITH LINDA...SHE WASN'T REAL PRETTY, BUT IT WAS DARK...NICE AND DARK...



I ALWAYS TRY TO GET A SEAT ON THE BUS NEAR JANE BREWSTER... SHE'S SO *BEAUTIFUL* ... I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO TALK WITH HER...



LINDA AND I DIDN'T TALK MUCH EITHER. SHE SEEMED SORT OF TOUGH... *EXPERIENCED*... A LOT MORE EXPERIENCED THAN I WAS...



IN THE MIDDLE OF BIOLOGY, THIS HEALTH OFFICIAL COMES IN AND TELLS US TO REPORT TO THE AUDITORIUM ... HE'S WEARING A PROTECTIVE MASK.



I COULD HAVE USED SOME PROTECTION... THE NEXT MORNING I HAD A BRIGHT RED RASH ON MY STOMACH SHAPED LIKE A DEVIL'S HEAD...



IN THE AUDITORIUM WE'RE GIVEN CARDS TO FILL OUT, THEN A DOCTOR STARTS TALKING ABOUT THE NEW EPIDEMIC...THE *TEEN PLAGUE*!



I REMEMBER FIRST HEARING ABOUT IT ON TV... MY DAD WAS ALL FLIPPED OUT, RANTING AND RAVING ABOUT "THOSE KINDS OF KIDS".



SLIDES ARE SHOWN OF SOME OF THE VARIOUS FORMS OF THE PLAGUE...A BOY WITH RUBBERY BONES...A GIRL WITH REPTILE SKIN...

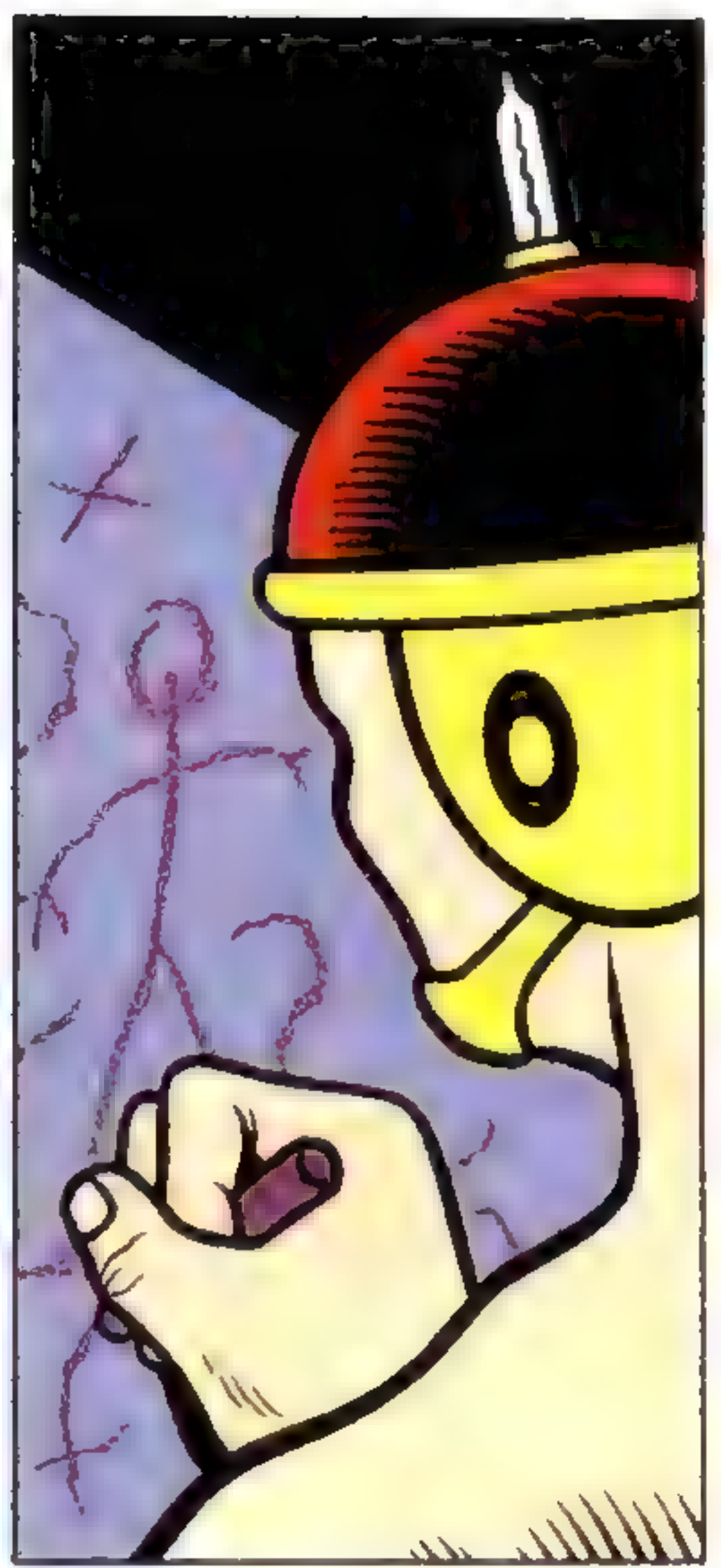
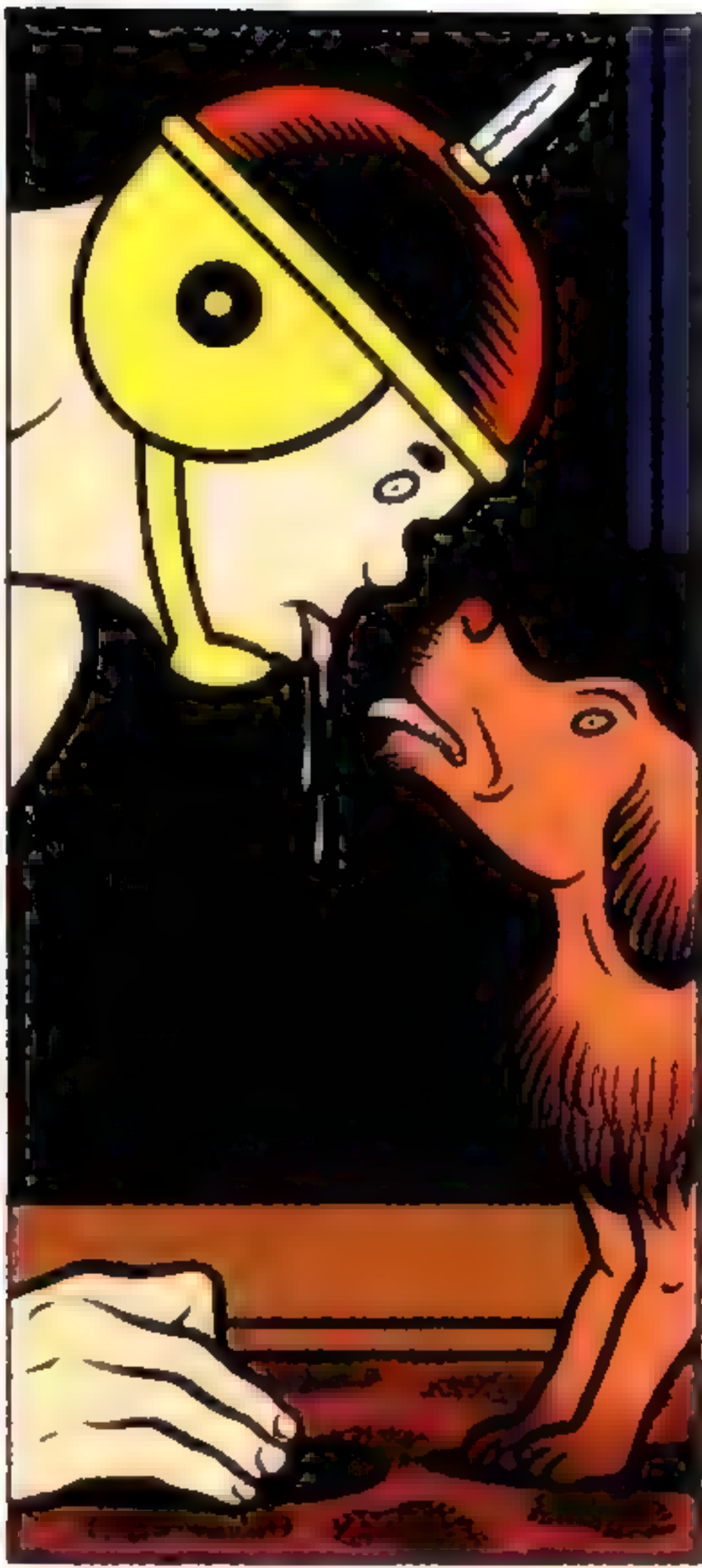
ST. JOE'S WAS THE FIRST HIGH SCHOOL TO BE QUARANTINED...SINCE THEN THERE HAVE BEEN TWO OR THREE OTHERS...



TIME'S RUNNING OUT... AFTER THE SLIDE SHOW THE DOCTOR TELLS US WE'RE ALL GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE A COMPLETE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION...I GUESS I WON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR THIS STUFF TO REACH MY FACE...THEY'LL CLOSE DOWN THE SCHOOL AND *EVERYONE* WILL KNOW THAT I'M THE CARRIER... I'M *DISEASED*... I'M ONE OF *THOSE* KINDS OF KIDS!



...ONE OF THE SLIDES THEY SHOWED WAS OF A GIRL WITH BLOOD RED SKIN THAT WAS STRETCHED SO TIGHT IT WAS STARTING TO SPLIT...I'M NOT POSITIVE, BUT I THINK IT WAS LINDA.





DOG-BOY

© 1981 CHARNIL BEY

THE SUN IS RISING ON CENTER CITY AS DOG-BOY STARTS HIS DAY WITH A CUP OF COFFEE AND A KOOL MILD...

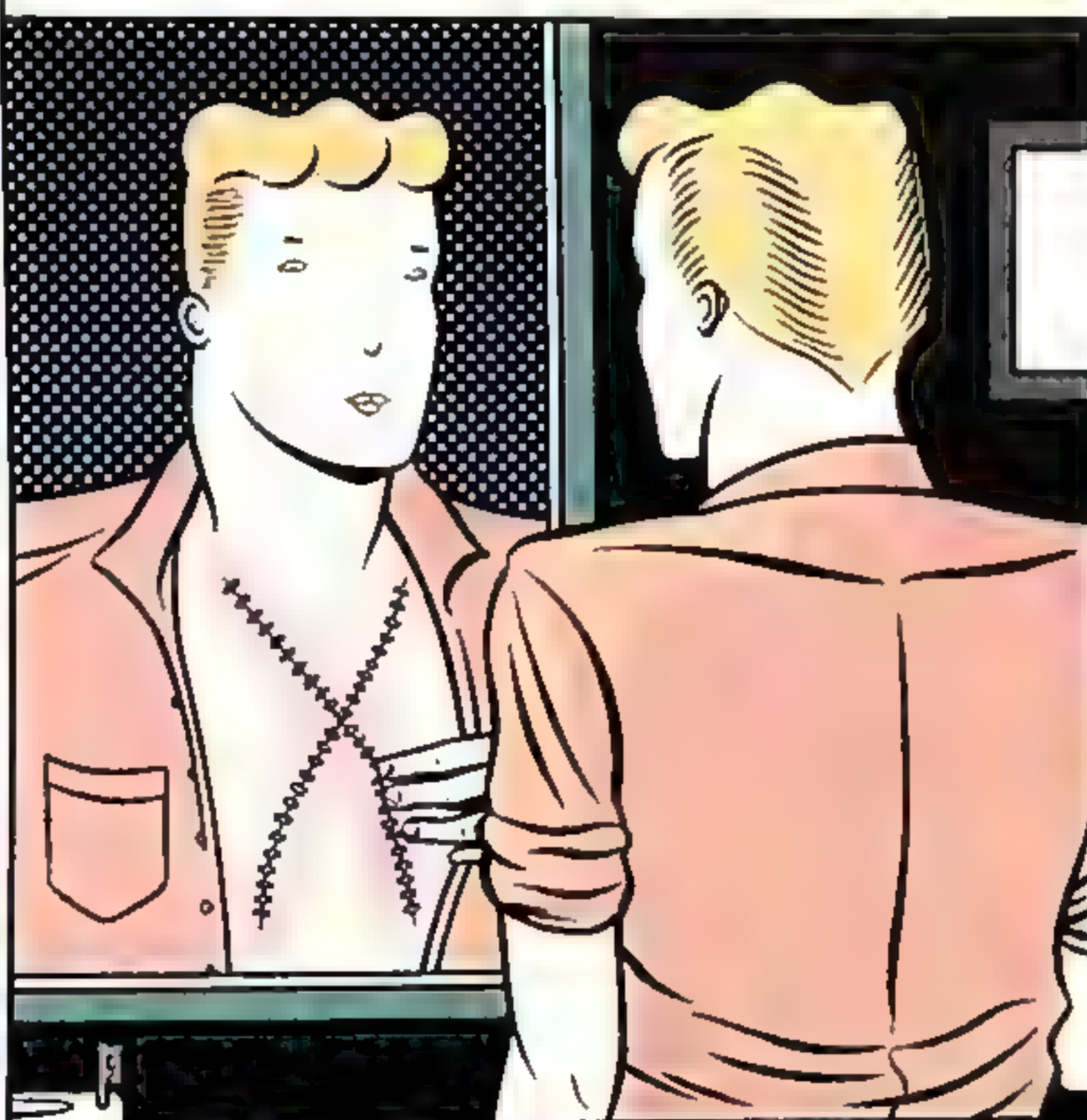


GOSH, I WISH I HAD NEVER TOLD THE GUYS AT WORK ABOUT MY OPERATION... NOW THEY ALL CALL ME DOG-BOY!

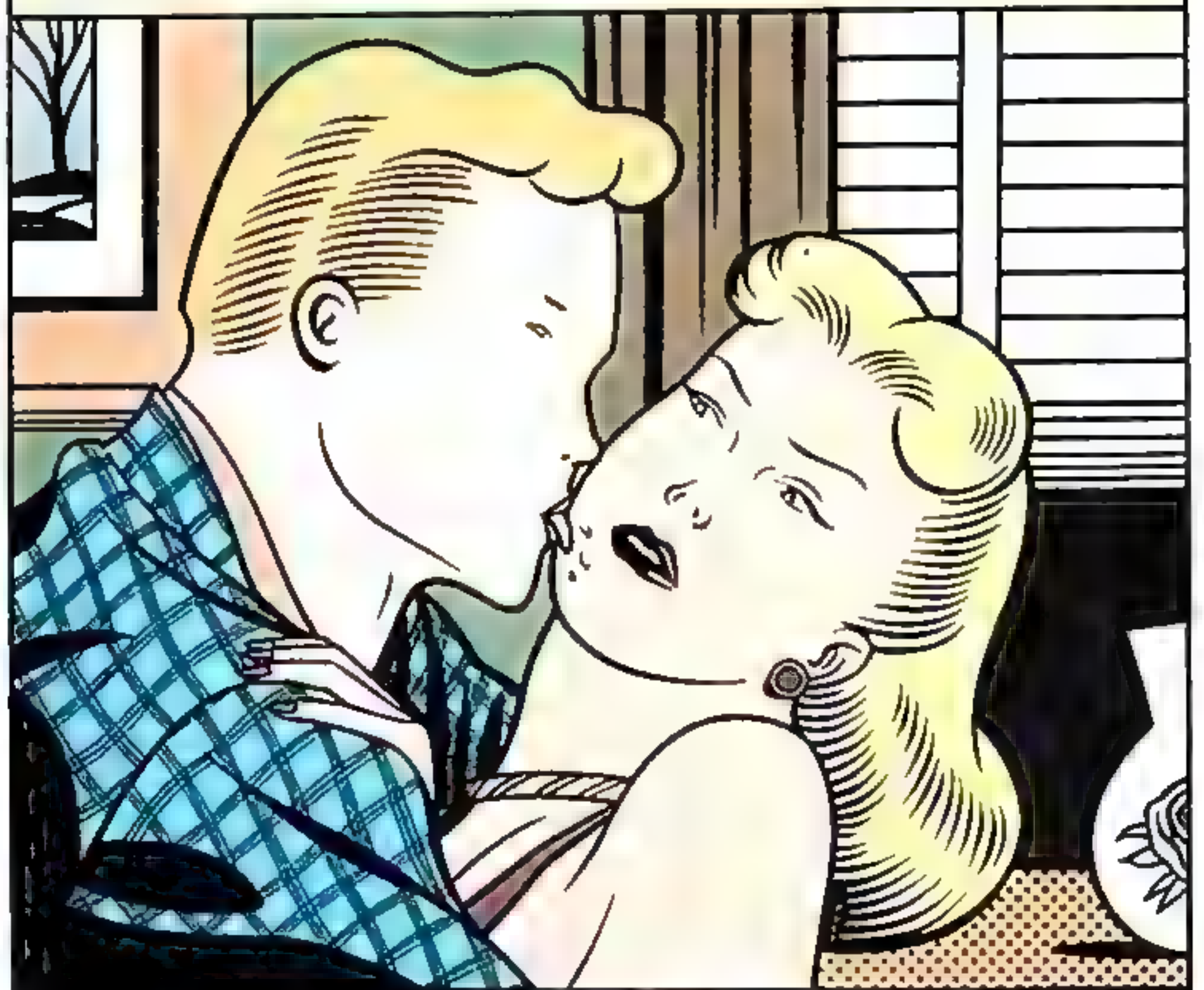
WHEN DOG-BOY WAS YOUNG, HE SUFFERED FROM A CHRONIC HEART AILMENT. AFTER ALL OTHER TREATMENTS FAILED, HE CONSENTED TO A TOTALLY ILLEGAL HEART TRANSPLANT... BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF A DONOR, A DOG HEART HAD TO BE USED,



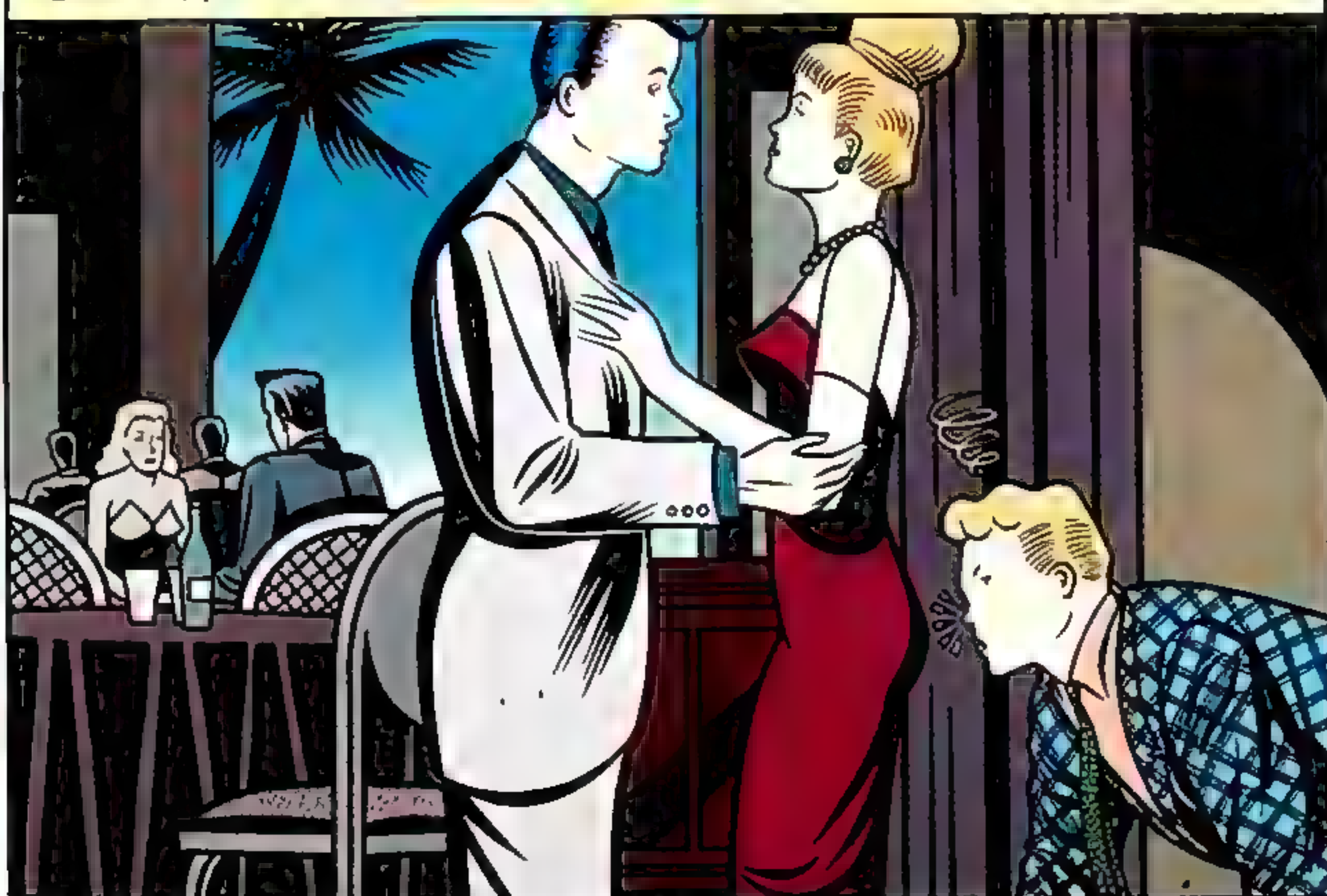
NOW DOG-BOY LEADS AN ALMOST NORMAL EXISTENCE WITH A TINY BLACK LABRADOR HEART PUMPING BLOOD THROUGH HIS VEINS...



THE ONLY NOTICEABLE SIDE EFFECT OF THE OPERATION IS A SLIGHT CHANGE IN HIS SOCIAL BEHAVIOR... STRANGE WAYS OF DISPLAYING AFFECTION...



HIS METHOD OF ACQUAINTING HIMSELF WITH MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO MOST PEOPLE...

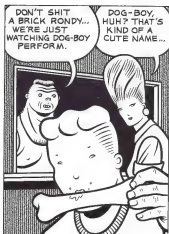


DOG-BOY ALWAYS:

- EATS A WELL BALANCED MEAL
- WAITS UNTIL THE SECOND DATE
- LOOKS BOTH WAYS
- SELECTS FASHIONABLE CLOTHING
- RESPONDS TO COMMANDS

DOG-BOY NEVER:

- CHASES CARS
- NEGLECTS PROPER HYGIENE
- FORGETS HIS WAY HOME
- USES PUBLIC RESTROOMS
- RESPONDS TO RINGING BELLS
- WANTS TO BE FORMALLY INTRODUCED





SOMEHOW I ALWAYS SEEM TO MAKE THE WRONG IMPRESSION...



LINDA WAS THE FIRST GIRL I WENT OUT WITH...SHE JUST DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO HAVE A GOOD TIME...



THEN THERE WAS DONNA WHO FOUND FAULT WITH EVERYTHING I DID...EVEN MY EATING HABITS.



LOIS WAS NICE BUT SHE HAD NO PATIENCE FOR MY VARIOUS HOBBIES...



...AND THERE WAS BETTY WHO ACCUSED ME OF BEING OVERLY PROTECTIVE...



MANDY WAS THE CLOSEST I EVER GOT TO HAVING A REAL GIRLFRIEND...UNTIL I ASKED THE WRONG QUESTION...



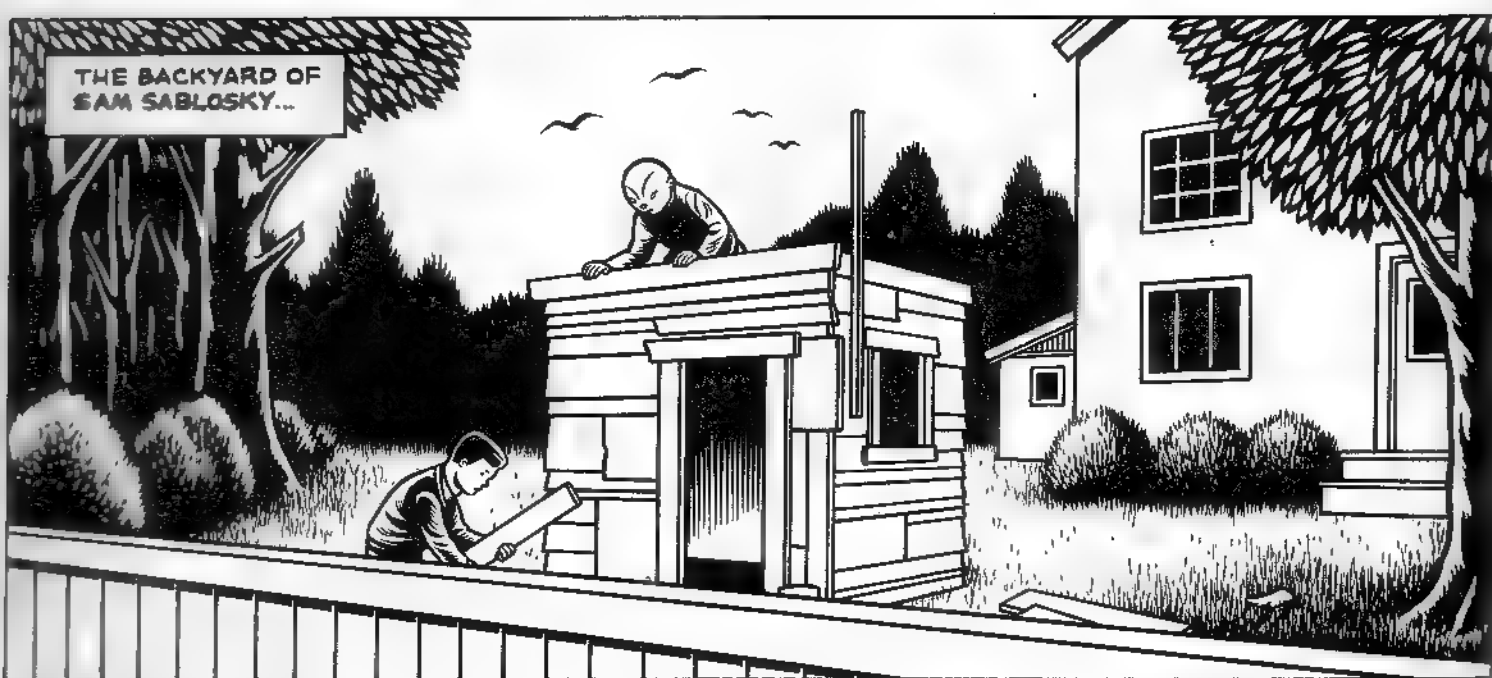
HEY! SNAP OUT OF IT, DOG-BOY! WE'RE CLOSING UP!







THE BACKYARD OF
SAM SABLOSKY...



ALMOST DONE...
LET'S GET THIS
LAST BOARD...



WOW...
IT'S A
BEAUTY!

YEAH, AND
THERE'S LOTS
OF ROOM...



HEY, WOULDN'T
IT BE NEAT TO
SPEND THE
NIGHT OUT
HERE?

YEAH!
LET'S GO
ASK MY
MOM!



HI, MOM...CAN TONY
AND I SPEND THE NIGHT
IN OUR NEW FORT?
TONY'S MOM SAYS
IT'S O.K.



HI, MOM...CAN I STAY
OVER AT SAM'S TONIGHT?
HIS MOM SAYS IT'S
O.K.



YEAH!



THAT NIGHT IN SAM AND TONY'S FORT...

COME ON, TONY!
NO MORE SCARY
STORIES...I'M GET-
TING **SPOOKED!**

LET ME FINISH!
I'M JUST GETTING
TO THE **GOOD**
PART!



...SO ANYWAY, HE'S TRAPPED
DOWN IN THE CAVE AND HE'S
JUST FOUND HIS FRIEND...
DEAD!



THE BATTERIES IN HIS
FLASHLIGHT ARE GETTING
WEAK SO HE CAN BARELY
SEE, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE
HIS FRIEND HAS BEEN
CLAWED TO DEATH!



CLAWED BY **WHAT?** JUST THEN
HE HEARS THIS FUNNY SOUND...
LIKE SCRATCHING OR SOMETHING...
AND GETTING CLOSER...
CLOSER!



HE TRIES TO SEE WHAT IT
IS, BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN HIS
FLASHLIGHT GOES DEAD! IT'S
BLACK! PITCH BLACK! AND
THE SCRATCHING SOUND IS
GETTING CLOSER... **CLOSER!**



**SCRATCH
SCRATCH**

UH...TONY?
ARE YOU
MAKING THAT
SOUND?



HEY!
WHERE YOU
GOING?

COME ON...LET'S
GO SEE WHAT'S
MAKING THAT
NOISE!



HOLD IT,
SAM...UH...
MAYBE THAT'S
NOT A VERY
GOOD IDEA...

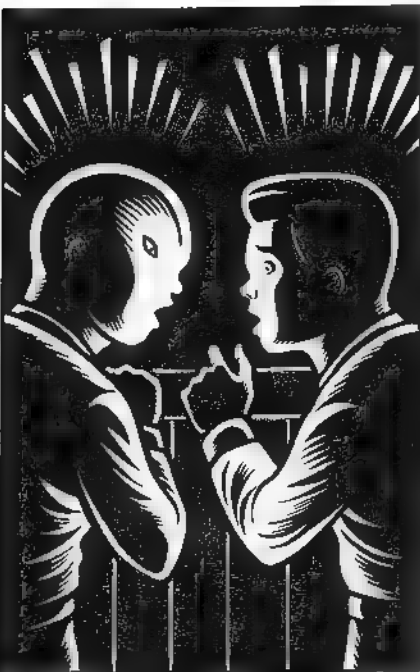
WHAT? ARE YOU
SCARED OR SOME-
THING? **YOU'RE**
THE ONE THAT'S
ALWAYS TELLING
CREEPY STORIES
AND STUFF!



I KNOW, BUT
THOSE ARE JUST
STORIES...THIS...
THIS IS THE
REAL THING!

O.K. FRAIDY
CAT...I'LL GO
LOOK BY
MYSELF...





A FEW MINUTES LATER...

IT'S GETTING LATE...BETTER HEAD BACK HOME...



HOLY MOLEY!
THAT GUY'S
EATIN' A BONE!

OHhh!
YUCKY!



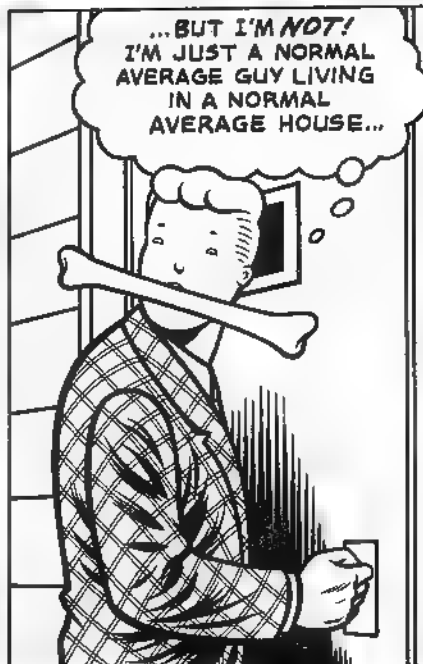
AW, THEY
DON'T KNOW WHAT
THEY'RE MISSING!



JUST BECAUSE I
LIKE A GOOD BONE
NOW AND THEN
THEY THINK I'M
SOME KIND OF
WEIRDO!



...BUT I'M *NOT!*
I'M JUST A NORMAL
AVERAGE GUY LIVING
IN A NORMAL
AVERAGE HOUSE...



GEE... ALL THAT
DIGGING MADE ME
TIRED...IT'S TIME
FOR BED...



LATER...

IT'S NO USE, I
CAN'T SLEEP...I
KEEP THINKING
ABOUT...ABOUT
GIRLS!



HOW COME I CAN NEVER FIND A GIRL THAT
REALLY UNDERSTANDS ME?



SOMEHOW I ALWAYS SEEM TO MAKE THE
WRONG IMPRESSION...



MY LIFE WAS GOING ALONG JUST FINE UNTIL I WENT TO SEE THAT CREEPY DOCTOR...



AS FAR AS I CAN TELL YOU'RE IN EXCELLENT SHAPE EXCEPT FOR ONE THING...

YEAH? UH... WHAT'S THAT?



YOU'VE GOT A **BAD HEART...**

GEE...WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT, ANYWAY?



IN MEDICAL TERMS? WELL...IT'S...IT'S ALL MESS'D UP... IT'S GOTTA BE **YANKED!**



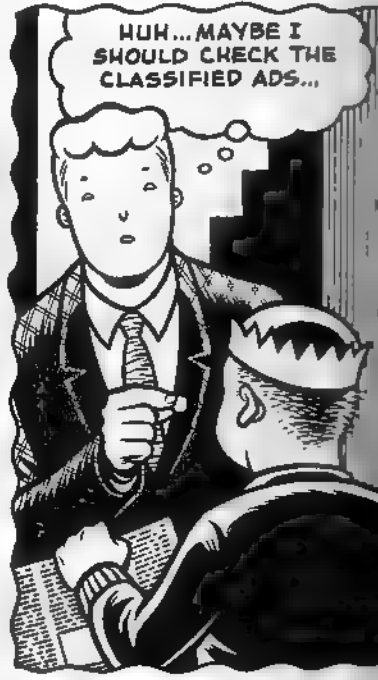
THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS... THAT'S HOW MUCH THE DOCTOR TOLD ME A NEW HEART WOULD COST...



THIRTY *THOUSAND* DOLLARS! I'LL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH THAT KIND OF MONEY...I BARELY GET BY AS IT IS!



READ ALL ABOUT IT! GIANT EYEBALLS SIGHTED!



HUH...MAYBE I SHOULD CHECK THE CLASSIFIED ADS...



IF I COULD ONLY FIND A BETTER PAYING JOB, THEN...HEY! WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT'S *THIS*?



SURGERY

\$9.95

ASK FOR "DOC" BENWAY

CUT RATE PRICES

579-4427



WHAT THE HECK... IT'S WORTH A TRY...

A FEW NIGHTS LATER I WENT TO SEE "DOC" BENWAY...



THAT'S FUNNY...IT'S THE RIGHT ADDRESS, BUT THIS SURE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A DOCTOR'S OFFICE...



OH, WELL... HERE GOES NOTHING...



FREEZE! PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD! ONE FUNNY MOVE AND YOU'RE DEAD MEAT!



O.K. BOZO...WHO THE HELL ARE YOU? WHERE'D YOU GET MY ADDRESS?



UH...UH...IN THE PAPER...I SAW AN AD FOR CUT RATE SURGERY...



SURGERY? WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO? HEY, COME IN... WANNA DRINK OR SOMETHING?

I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THERE WAS SOMETHING FUNNY ABOUT "DOC" BENWAY... BUT I WAS **DESPERATE!**



YEAH, UMM...WE WERE JUST HAVING A LITTLE PARTY...**DONNA!** GET THIS MAN A **DRINK!** NOW!



I DON'T MIND MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE, SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST SIT BACK AND TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU...



YOU...YOU'RE REALLY A DOCTOR?

YOU BET YOUR SWEET **ASS** I AM! THE BEST IN THE WEST!

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?
SOME FANCY SHMANCY OFFICE?
A BUNCH OF WORTHLESS
CREDENTIALS ON THE WALL?



HEY, MAN, I DON'T NEED ALL
THAT CRAP! I'M A GODDAMN ARTIST,
MAN! I GOTTA DO MY OWN
THING! I GOTTA BE ME!



NOW COME ON,
WADDA YOU WANT,
HUH? I DON'T GOT
ALL DAY!



A WEEK LATER, I WAS BEING WHEELED
INTO SURGERY...

JUST RELAX,
THIS IS GONNA
WORK...I SWEAR
TA GOD!



HEY...THEY'VE
TRANSPLANTED APE
HEARTS INTO HUMANS,
RIGHT? SO WHY NOT
A DOG HEART?



BESIDES...YOU
DON'T HAVE MUCH
OF A CHOICE,
DO YOU?



O.K. NURSE...
GAS HIM!



THAT NURSE...NURSE
BETTY...SHE WAS A NICE
GIRL...NICE...



LATER THAT NIGHT...



N-NO...
NOOOO!



NO NEED TO WORRY, BUDDY...
THE OPERATION WORKED OUT
JUST FINE...NO LEFT OVER
PARTS OR NOTHING!

THEN...THEN I'M
O.K...BUT WHO
ARE ALL THESE
WEIRD PEOPLE?

WEIRD?
WE'RE NOT
WEIRD!



AND WHAT'S
THIS FUZZY
THING?

WHY DON'T
YOU JUST GET
UP AND FIND
OUT, STUPID!



WAAHHH!



WAH! WAAH!
W-WHA? IT... IT
WAS ONLY A BAD
DREAM! UMMM...
WHAT TIME IS IT?



AW, JEEZ! I FORGOT TO
SET THE ALARM AGAIN!
I'LL BE LATE FOR
WORK!

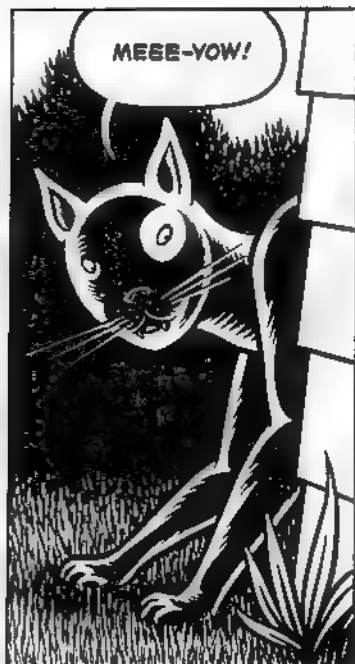


IF I RUN I SHOULD BE
ABLE TO MAKE THE
SEVEN-FIFTEEN TRAIN!



MEYOW?

HUH?!



MEE-YOW!



JUST IGNORE THAT STUPID CAT! IF YOU CHASE IT YOU'LL NEVER MAKE THE TRAIN!



MEE-MEE-MEE-YOW!



ONE HOUR LATER...

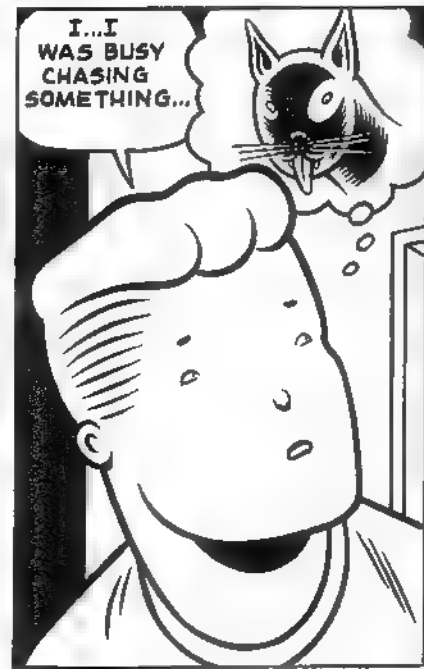
LATE AGAIN DOG BOY! THAT'S THE THIRD TIME THIS WEEK!



HUSTLE YOUR ASS, DOG BOY! WE NEED THOSE DISHES FOR THE LUNCH RUSH!



YOU KEEP COMIN' IN LATE, YOU'RE GONNA GET CANNED! WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE THIS TIME?



I...I WAS BUSY CHASING SOMETHING...



CHASING SOMETHING? WHAT? CHASING A LITTLE TAIL?



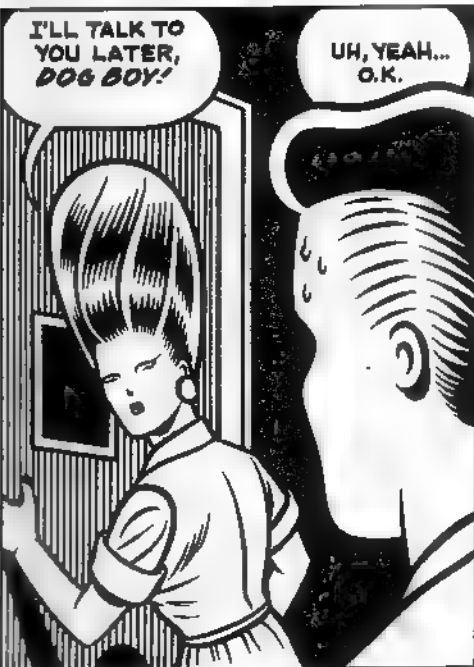
WELL, UM... SORT OF...



HAH! FINALLY LETTIN' THE ANIMAL OUT, HUH DOG-BOY?

SPEAKIN' OF WHICH, WE GOT US A NEW WAITRESS THAT YOU AIN'T EVEN GONNA BELIEVE! HER NAME'S RONDY! RAH-RAH-RONDY!





I GUESS HAVING A HEART TRANSPLANT IS A PRETTY BIG DEAL, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY USE A **DOG HEART**, BUT GEE...I WAS FEELING GREAT IN **NO TIME**...



I WAS ALSO FEELING **OTHER THINGS**... WEIRD NEW SENSATIONS I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND...



MY, IT'S **HOT** IN HERE! LET ME PLUG IN THIS FAN FOR YOU...



WHA-? WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU **DOING**? SETTLE DOWN BEFORE YOU BREAK YOUR STITCHES!



ALRIGHT, I'LL SETTLE DOWN, IF YOU PROMISE ME ONE THING...



YES?

PROMISE ME YOU'LL GO OUT ON A DATE WITH ME WHEN I'M ALL BETTER...O.K.?



A FEW WEEKS LATER, I WAS RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL...

UH...I'VE NEVER BEEN ON A DATE BEFORE, SO I'M NOT REAL SURE WHERE TO TAKE YOU...



...BUT I FIGURE WE CAN WALK AROUND A WHILE UNTIL WE FIND SOMEPLACE NICE...



HEY, THIS SURE LOOKS NEAT... LET'S GO IN!

S-SURE...





ALRIGHT, YOU SON OF UH
BITCH... **GET UP!** YOU'RE
GONNA WISH YOU WAS
NEVER BORN...

**WAIT! WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?**

I'M GONNA CAVE
THIS JERK'S HEAD
IN... CAUGHT HIM
SNIFFIN' MY
GIRL'S BUTT...

...AND **NOBODY**
SNIFFS MY GIRL'S
BUTT EXCEPT ME!

ULP.

BOY, I'LL NEVER FORGET
THE LOOK ON BETTY'S
FACE... AFTER SHE
HEARD WHAT HAPPENED,
SHE JUST LET THAT GUY
GO AHEAD AND BEAT
ME UP...

HE SURE
WAS A BIG,
UGLY GUY...
KINDA
REMINDS
ME OF...

**HEY! DOG BOY! HOW'S
IT HANGIN'? IT'S
ALMOST QUITTIN' TIME,
AND ME AND RUFUS
GOT US A GREAT IDEA...**

SEEMS THAT NEW
WAITRESS HAS TAKEN A
LIKING TO YOU AND... UH...
HOW 'BOUT YOU ASKIN'
HER OUT AND WE'LL MAKE
IT A THREESOME?

A **FOUR-
SOME!**

**HEY! WHAT
RE YOU GUYS
TALKING
ABOUT?**

HI, RONDY... RUFUS
AND DUFUS WERE
JUST SAYING I
SHOULD ASK YOU
OUT ON A DATE...

A DATE, HUH? LAST TIME I
WAS ON A DATE I WAS THIRTEEN
YEARS OLD... BUT, UH... YOU'RE
PRETTY CUTE, DOG BOY...

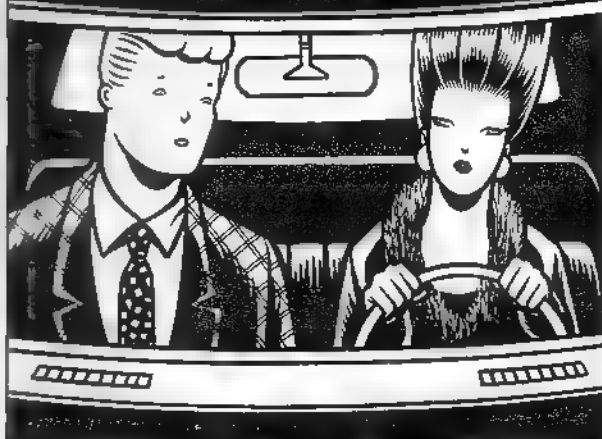
GO CHANGE YOUR
DUDS AND YOU LET **ME**
TAKE YOU OUT... I'LL
SHOW YOU THE TIME OF
YOUR **LIFE!**

CAN WE
GO TOO?

LATER...

WOW...THIS SURE IS
A NEAT CAR, RONDY...
WHERE ARE WE GOING?

FIRST STOP
IS THE
LOVE
LOUNGE...



THE LOVE
LOUNGE?

YEAH...IT'S
TIME TO CUT
LOOSE! WE
GOTTA GET
US SOME
DRINKY WINKYS!



DRINKY
WINKYS?



A FEW MINUTES LATER, AT THE "LOVE LOUNGE"...

HOWDY, KIDS! I
WANT Y'ALL TO
MEET *DOG BOY*!

HI, DOG
BOY!

HI!

HEY
FELLA!



WHAT CAN
I GET YA,
RONDY?

HI, RALPH...
WE'LL START
WITH TWO
PINK FUZZIES...



MMM... A
FUZZY DRINK...
THAT SOUNDS
GOOD!



TWO DRINKS LATER...

HEY, CHECK IT OUT!
DOG BOY'S SHOWIN'
EVERYONE HIS
SCAR!

OOOHH,
NEAT! CAN
I TOUCH IT?



FOUR DRINKS LATER...

DOWN, BOY!
DOWN!



SIX DRINKS LATER...

COME ON, DOG BOY!
TRY IT AGAIN!
JUMP! JUMP!





JEEZ, DOG BOY... YOU SHOULD COME HERE MORE OFTEN...YOU'RE **LOADS OF FUN!**

FUN? **HEY!** I KNOW WHAT'S FUN! WHERE'S RONDY?



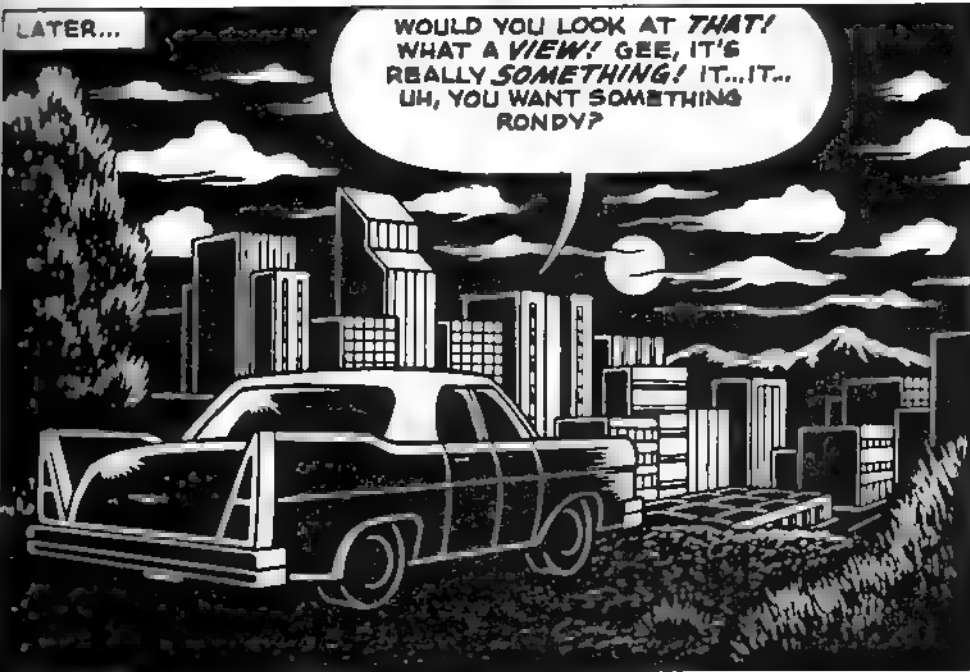
RONDY! I JUST GOT A **GREAT** IDEA! THERE'S A FULL MOON TONIGHT, AND... AND...

WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND? A LITTLE MOONLIGHT... A LITTLE ROMANCE?



HECK, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE NEAT TO TAKE ALL THE KIDS OUTSIDE AND SHOW 'EM HOW TO **HOWL!**

WHY DON'T I TAKE **YOU** OUT AND SHOW YOU A THING OR TWO?



LATER...

WOULD YOU LOOK AT **THAT!** WHAT A **VIEW!** GEE, IT'S REALLY **SOMETHING!** IT...IT... UH, YOU WANT SOMETHING RONDY?



MMM...YEAH, WHY DON'T YOU UNBUCKLE YOUR SEATBELT AND MOVE A LITTLE CLOSER... I WON'T BITE...

G-GULP.



WHAT'S THE MATTER, DOG BOY? DON'T YOU LIKE GIRLS?

I...I LIKE THEM JUST FINE, BUT... BUT I'M NOT REALLY SURE IF THIS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO...



OF **COURSE** IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO...YOUR **DOGGY INSTINCT** SHOULD TELL YOU **THAT!** COME ON, BIG FELLA... LET THE **ANIMAL** OUT!



THAT'S JUST WHAT I'M **AFRAID** OF DOING...I'M AFRAID I...I...



OH NO! IT'S THAT CAT AGAIN! J-JUST IGNORE IT!

MMM...YOU'RE REALLY SWEATING, DOG BOY...



IF I CHASE THAT CAT, RONDY WILL THINK I'M CRAZY! DON'T DO IT!

THAT'S IT... I LIKE GUYS WHO GROWL...

GRRRRRR



ARF! ARF! ARF!



AN HOUR LATER...

THAT DARN CAT! I...I THINK I LOST HIM!



AW, GEE...I THINK I'M LOST! I'LL NEVER FIND MY WAY BACK TO THE CAR!



IT WOULDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE ANYWAY...I'M SURE RONDY'S LONG GONE BY NOW...BOY, I REALLY MUFFED IT THIS TIME...



RONDY'S NICE...SHE'S DIFFERENT ... SHE'S SEEN ME WHEN I GET A LITTLE, UM...UH... CARRIED AWAY, AND SHE STILL LIKES ME!



MOST GIRLS TREAT ME LIKE I'M A CRAZY PERSON OR SOMETHING!

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? I'M JUST CHECKING!



THEY JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO HAVE FUN!

GO ON...JUST DRIVE YOUR CAR, AND I'LL CHASE IT FOR A FEW BLOCKS!

YEAH...THIS DOG HEART SURE GETS ME INTO TROUBLE...

IT GETS ME INTO BAD TROUBLE...

...AND I'M GONNA BE IN A WHOLE HEAP OF TROUBLE IF I DON'T FIND MY WAY OUT OF THESE WOODS...



DON'T EVEN LET HIM GET NEAR YOU...HE LICKS FACES!

EWEW!



THAT'S HIM, OFFICER... HE TOLD ME HIS WHOLE BACK YARD WAS FILLED WITH BURIED BONES!



WHAT TH-? UH-OH...

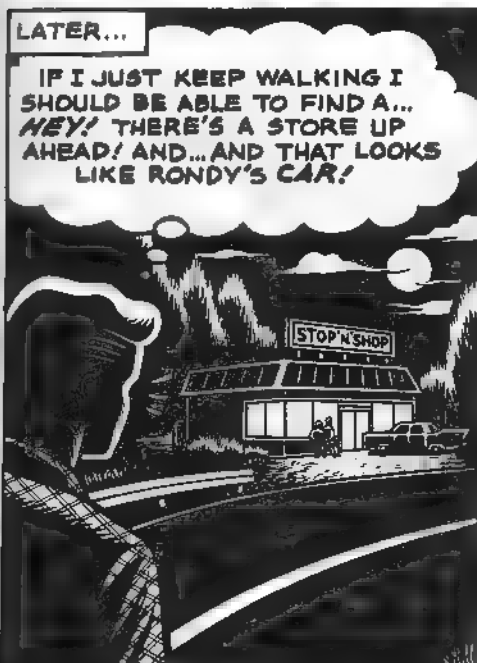
CRACK!



WACK!



WHEW! BACK TO CIVILIZATION...



LATER...

IF I JUST KEEP WALKING I SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND A... HEY! THERE'S A STORE UP AHEAD! AND...AND THAT LOOKS LIKE RONDY'S CAR!



IT IS! THERE'S RONDY!



HEY, FOX... WHERE YOU GOIN' SO FAST?

YEAH... LOOKS LIKE YOU COULD USE A LITTLE COMPANY...

GET LOST, YOU CREEPS!

COME ON,
BABY...WE'LL
SHOW YOU A
GOOD TIME...

HANDS
OFF,
DORK
FACE!

ARF! ARF!
ARF!

HUH?

WHAT
THE...?

EEYAAA

A FEW SECONDS LATER...

MY HERO! I CAN'T
TELL YOU HOW GLAD
I AM TO SEE YOU!

YOU-YOU'RE
NOT MAD
AT ME FOR
CHASING
THAT CAT?

OF COURSE
NOT, SILLY!
I'VE BEEN
DRIVING ALL
OVER LOOKING
FOR YOU!

I JUST STOPPED HERE
TO PICK UP A FEW THINGS,
AND...AW, COME ON...LET'S
GET OUT OF HERE!

LOOK...I
BOUGHT YOU
A LITTLE
TREAT!

OH, BOY!
DOGGY
DOODLES! MY
FAVORITE!

WELL, DOG BOY...
WHAT DO YOU
SAY WE CALL
IT A DAY?

CRUNCH...
CRUNCH...

END





RIGHT, ANOTHER DAY...
HOW LONG CAN I KEEP
THIS UP? I...I'M GOING
NUTS!



LOOK AT ME! MY NERVES
ARE *SHOT*! IF ONLY HE'D
JUST... JUST LEAVE ME
ALONE!



HALF AN HOUR LATER...

WE'RE
HOME, SIR.



GOOD EVENING,
RUPERT... HOW DID
THINGS GO
TODAY?



EVERYTHING IS
PROGRESSING
QUITE SMOOTHLY,
SIR... I HAVE A
COMPLETE REPORT
OF TODAY'S
ACTIVITIES.

I'LL LOOK
AT IT
LATER...
I'M TOO
EXHAUSTED
RIGHT NOW...



WILL YOU
BE DINING
THIS
EVENING,
SIR?

UH... NO FOOD...
JUST HAVE DR.
FELDON PREPARE
AN INJECTION FOR
ME... I'LL BE IN
MY STUDY.



LATER...

THERE... THAT'S
BETTER... I FEEL
HALFWAY HUMAN
AGAIN...



HUH? W-WHAT'S
THAT LIGHT COMING
FROM MY BEDROOM?

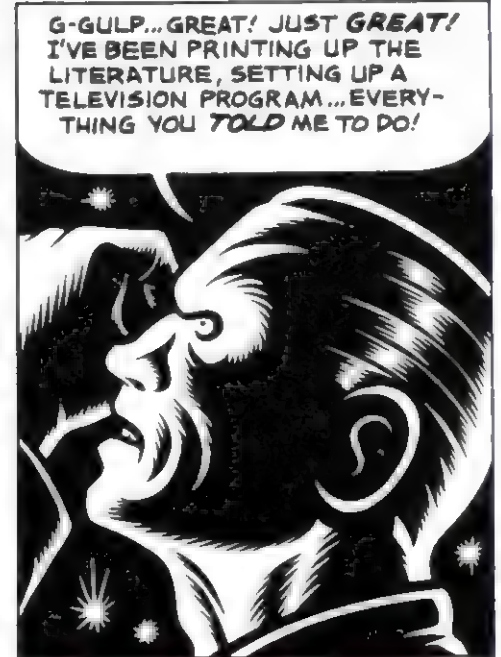


OH, MY
GOD!

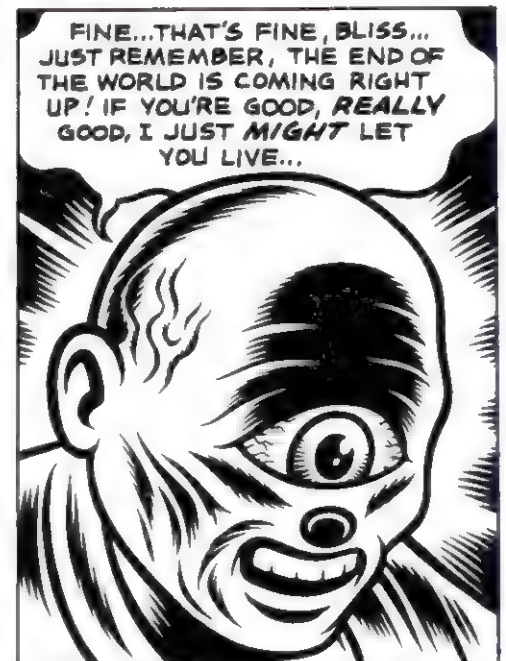
YES?



COME IN, BLISS...IT'S BEEN QUITE A WHILE SINCE WE'VE HAD A CHAT...TELL ME, HOW ARE OUR PLANS PROGRESSING?



G-GULP...GREAT! JUST GREAT! I'VE BEEN PRINTING UP THE LITERATURE, SETTING UP A TELEVISION PROGRAM...EVERYTHING YOU TOLD ME TO DO!



FINE...THAT'S FINE, BLISS... JUST REMEMBER, THE END OF THE WORLD IS COMING RIGHT UP! IF YOU'RE GOOD, REALLY GOOD, I JUST MIGHT LET YOU LIVE...



BEFORE I GO, LET ME GIVE YOU THESE BLUEPRINTS...

BLUE-PRINTS?

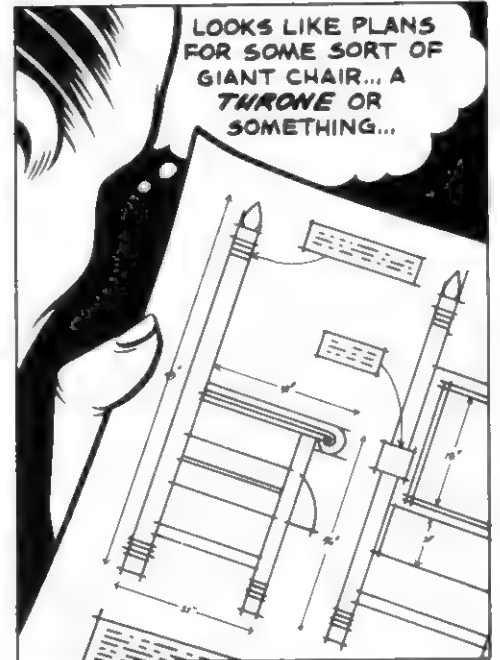


...JUST ANOTHER PROJECT I WANT YOU TO GET STARTED ON... IMMEDIATELY!

YES, SIR!

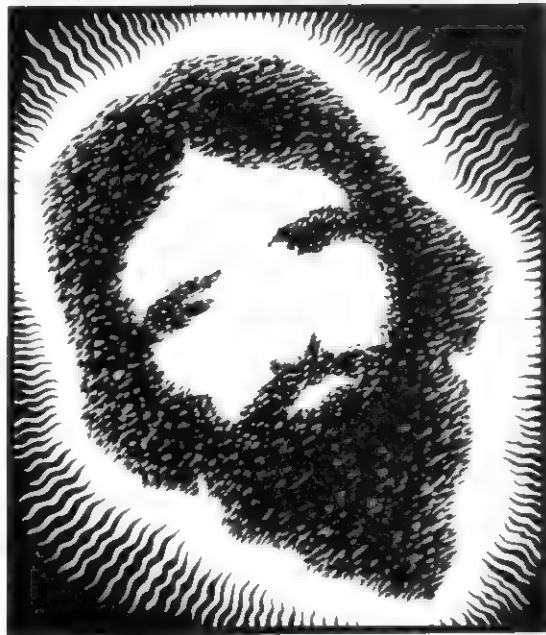


THAT'S ALL FOR NOW, BLISS...JUST REMEMBER, I'LL BE KEEPING AN EYE ON YOU!

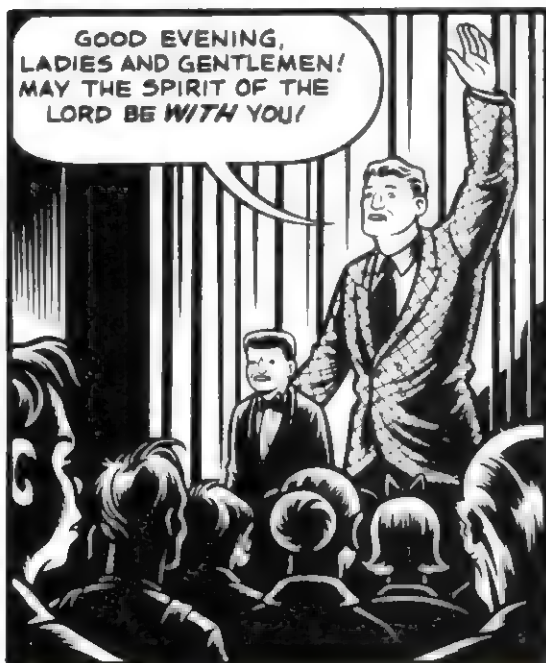




WELL, NOT A *PICTURE* REALLY...A *BURN*...

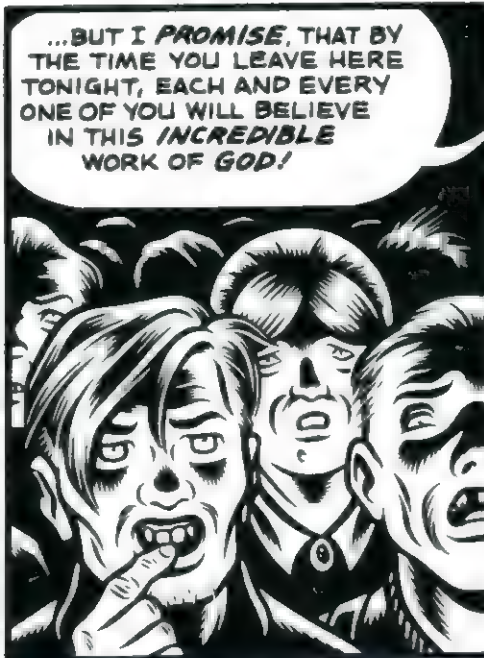


A *MIRACULOUS BURN*!





NOW, THE WHOLE NOTION OF A MIRACLE IN THIS DAY AND AGE MAY SEEM A LITTLE FAR-FETCHED TO SOME OF YOU FOLKS...



...BUT I *PROMISE*, THAT BY THE TIME YOU LEAVE HERE TONIGHT, EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU WILL BELIEVE IN THIS *INCREDIBLE* WORK OF GOD!



HOW AM I GOING TO DO THAT? BY OFFERING *PROOF*! PROOF IN THE FORM OF A *MOVING PICTURE*!



WATCH THE SCREEN BEHIND ME AND LISTEN CLOSELY AS I DESCRIBE FOR YOU THE FATEFUL EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE LESS THAN THREE MONTHS AGO!



WHAT YOU SEE HERE IS A HOUSE ENGULFED IN FLAMES...NOT JUST *ANY* HOUSE...IT'S THE HUMBLE HOUSE I CALLED *HOME*!



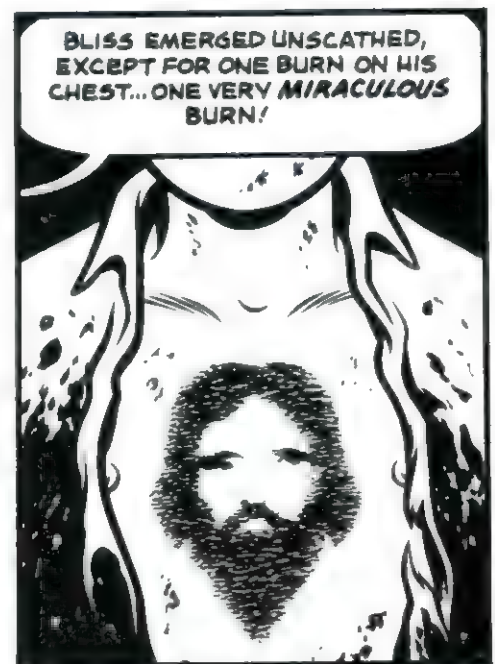
...AND THIS IS MY WIFE...NORMALLY A CALM, SOBER WOMAN, BUT IMAGINE IF YOU WILL, BEING TOLD THAT YOUR ONLY CHILD HAS BEEN TRAPPED WITHIN THIS FIERY INFERNO!



OUR ONLY CHILD! SUFFERING A DEATH TOO *HORRIBLE* TO IMAGINE! WHAT COULD WE *DO*? WHAT WOULD *YOU* DO? MY WIFE AND I PRAYED AS WE HAD NEVER PRAYED BEFORE!



...AND IN THE SMOLDERING AFTERMATH WE DISCOVERED OUR PRAYERS HAD BEEN *ANSWERED*! BY DIVINE INTERVENTION OUR SON HAD SURVIVED THE SMOKE AND THE FLAMES...



BLISS EMERGED UNSCATHED, EXCEPT FOR ONE BURN ON HIS CHEST...ONE VERY *MIRACULOUS* BURN!



DAD SURE KNEW HOW TO PUT ON A GOOD SHOW... THOSE POOR FOOLS JUST ATE IT UP...



...AND THE MONEY JUST *ROLLED* IN... BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS WENT FOR A QUARTER AND A SPECIAL HAND TINTED VERSION WENT FOR FIFTY CENTS...



...AND ANYONE WHO COUGHED UP A *DOLLAR* COULD TOUCH MY CHEST...



IT WAS PRETTY EXCITING AT FIRST... MOVING FROM TOWN TO TOWN, ALWAYS BEING THE CENTER OF ATTENTION...



THEN ONE DAY, I STUMBLED ONTO THE TRUTH...



...AND SOMEHOW I CONVINCED MYSELF THAT I ACTUALLY HAD THE POWER TO HEAL...



THE MAGIC AND EXCITEMENT DISAPPEARED...I BEGAN TO REALIZE WHAT I REALLY WAS... A *FREAK*!



A FREAK WHO WAS BEING ROBBED OF A NORMAL CHILDHOOD...



A FREAK WHO WAS BEING USED TO ROB IGNORANT AND HOPELESS PEOPLE OF THEIR HARD EARNED CASH...



...SO HOW MANY YEARS DID THE MIRACULOUS BLISS BLISTER PERFORM? SIX? SEVEN? JESUS...AND EVERY YEAR IT GOT WORSE...THOSE **FACES...**



YELLOW EYES...THE SMELL OF URINE AND SWEAT AND CHEAP BOOZE...SKIN THE COLOR OF ROTTEN MEAT...



FACES NUMB WITH PAIN...BEYOND PAIN...BEYOND REDEMPTION...SINKING FAST AND CLUTCHING AT ANYTHING!



FINALLY, THE DAY CAME WHEN I JUST COULDN'T STOMACH IT ANY LONGER... I MADE AN OATH TO MYSELF THAT I WOULD NEVER, **NEVER** FEED OFF OF HUMAN MISERY THE WAY MY FATHER HAD!



...SO SHORTLY AFTER MY SEVENTEENTH BIRTHDAY, I JUST TURNED MY BACK ON IT ALL AND **RAN!**



I DIDN'T HAVE ANY FIRM PLANS...I JUST WANTED TO GET AWAY...TO GET **LOST!**



WHERE YOU HEADIN', KID?

UH... WEST.

...BUT GETTING LOST WAS HARDER THAN I THOUGHT...I WAS A CELEBRITY...



SAY...AIN'T YOU THAT PREACHER KID? I READ ABOUT YOU INNA **PAPERS!** YOUR MA AND PA ARE **LOOKIN' FOR YOU!**

IN ORDER TO SHED MY PAST, I HAD TO UNDERGO A TRANSFORMATION...



A MONTH AND A HALF LATER, I HAD TRAVELED AS FAR AS MY SMALL SAVINGS WOULD CARRY ME...



WITH MY LAST DOLLAR I BOUGHT A BAG OF HAMBURGERS AND A NEWSPAPER...



...AND STARTED LOOKING FOR A JOB... ANY JOB...



BACK THEN, JOBS WERE HARD TO COME BY, BUT AFTER A FEW DAYS OF POUNDING THE PAVEMENT, I FOUND ONE...



THE DAYS WERE LONG AND THE PAY WAS LOW... I DIDN'T MIND... I JUST WANTED A QUIET, SIMPLE LIFE.



I DIDN'T ATTEMPT TO MAKE FRIENDS... I WAS CONTENT TO RETURN TO MY FURNISHED ROOM AFTER WORK AND ENTERTAIN MYSELF...



THE DAYS TURNED INTO MONTHS, THE MONTHS INTO YEARS... I HAD FOUND MY PLACE IN THE WORLD... I WAS AT PEACE WITH MYSELF...



...UNTIL LANA ENTERED MY LIFE... SHE WAS A NEW GIRL WHO HAD JUST BEEN HIRED...



...AND SHE WAS INCREDIBLE!



AFTER LEADING A SECLUDED LIFE FOR SO MANY YEARS, I REALIZED I DIDN'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT DATING GIRLS...

...BUT LANA WAS WARM AND FRIENDLY, AND HELPED ME THROUGH THE THOSE FIRST AWKWARD MOMENTS...

IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I WAS HOPELESSLY IN LOVE...



I LOST INTEREST IN MY JOB...I FOUND IT HARD TO CONCENTRATE...



LATER ON I FOUND OUT IT WAS LANA WHO PULLED ME FROM THE FLAMES...



WHEN I WOKE UP IN THE HOSPITAL, I FELT STRANGE...LIKE I WAS FLOATING OUTSIDE OF MY BODY IN A DREAMY FARAWAY LAND...



...AND FLOATING IN FRONT OF ME WAS LANA'S BEAUTIFUL FACE...SHE WAS A VISION OF BEAUTY...AN ANGEL...



I SNAPPED OUT OF IT WHEN THE ANGEL OPENED HER MOUTH...



WHEN I LOOKED INTO HER COOL, GREY EYES, I KNEW IT WAS ALL OVER...



...THE QUIET, ANONYMOUS LIFE I HAD ENJOYED FOR SO MANY YEARS WAS THROUGH!



I WENT TO SEE YOU YEARS AGO! YOU WERE JUST A LITTLE KID THEN! LOOK! I STILL HAVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPH!



LANA DIDN'T WASTE ANY TIME...WE GOT MARRIED THREE DAYS LATER...



WE MOVED INTO A HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN AND STARTED MAKING PLANS...



THAT IS, LANA STARTED MAKING PLANS...





YEAH... LANA... CHRIST, SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL! I WAS **BLINDED** BY HER BEAUTY... BUT **HER** EYESIGHT WAS **PERFECT!** SHE KNEW A GOOD THING WHEN SHE **SAW** IT!



I **SAW** YOU HEAL THOSE PEOPLE! THEY'D TOUCH YOUR CHEST AND BE **CURED!**

BUT THAT WAS JUST A BIG **SHOW** MY FATHER PUT ON!



HE'D HIRE ACTORS TO POSE AS CRIPPLES, AND THEN GET THEM UP ON STAGE SO I COULD "HEAL" THEM!

SAY, THAT... THAT'S AN INTERESTING IDEA!



IT WAS THAT INTERESTING IDEA THAT REALLY STARTED THE GEARS TURNING IN LANA'S HEAD. A FEW MONTHS LATER, THE CROWDS WERE WRAPPED AROUND THE BLOCK TO SEE THE RETURN OF THE MIRACULOUS **BLISS BLISTER!**

THE DARK, UGLY MEMORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD LOOMED IN FRONT OF ME, BUT I IGNORED THEM...



YOU'RE DUE ON STAGE IN FIVE MINUTES, DARLING...

I WOULD HAVE IGNORED **ANYTHING** FOR LANA'S LOVE...



GEE, LANA... I... I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD...

OH, YOU **POOR** DEAR! I ALMOST FORGOT YOUR **INJECTION!**



WHAT EVER YOU DO... NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, PROMISE YOU WON'T STOP LOVING ME...

DON'T BE SILLY! OF **COURSE** I WON'T! NOW **HURRY!** THE SHOW'S STARTING!

IT WAS SO EASY...IN NO TIME AT ALL,
WE WERE MAKING THOUSANDS AND
THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS...



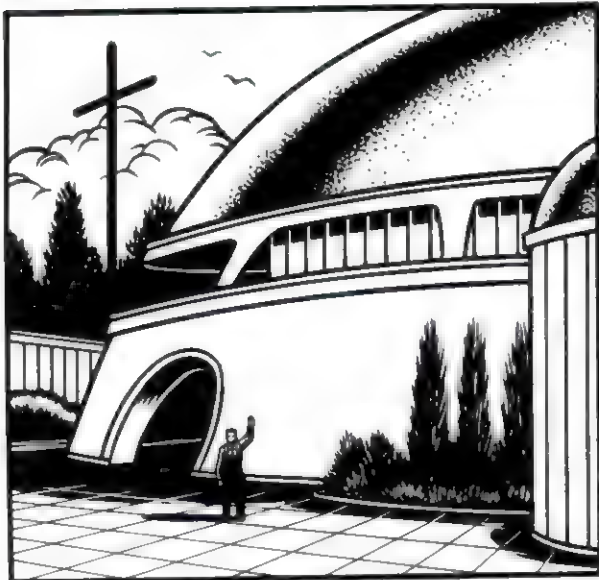
WE BRANCHED OUT...WE CREATED A
WHOLE LINE OF BOOKS AND
MERCHANDISE...



...BUT I THINK IT WAS OUR T.V. SHOW
THAT PUT US OVER THE TOP...



YEARS PASSED, AND THE BLISS BLISTER EMPIRE
GREW BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS...WE BUILT A
CHURCH THAT WOULD SEAT 5,000 PEOPLE...



WE BUILT A SCHOOL FOR RELIGIOUS
STUDIES...



...AND BECAUSE OF THE INCRED-
IBLE SUCCESS OF OUR TELEVISION
SHOW, WE BUILT OUR OWN STUDIO...



AS WE GOT MORE PROFESSIONAL, WE
STARTED SCREENING THE MEMBERS
OF OUR T.V. AUDIENCE TO WEED OUT
UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS...



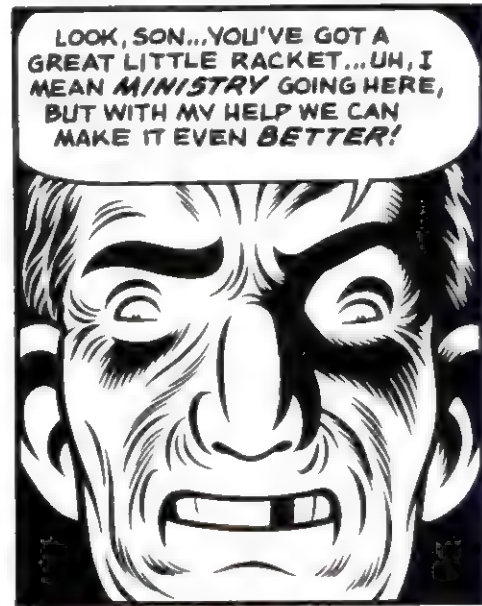
ONE DAY SOMEONE I REALLY DIDN'T
WANT TO SEE SLIPPED THROUGH...



DEAR OLD DAD...HE WAS A LITTLE WORSE FOR THE WEAR AND TEAR, BUT HE STILL HAD THAT SAME COLD FIRE BURNING IN HIS EYES...

...AND HE WAS STILL A SHOWMAN... HE KNEW HOW TO LAY IT ON THICK!

AFTER HIS SOB STORY, HE GOT DOWN TO SERIOUS BUSINESS...



LANA'S SOFT VOICE AND A SOOTHING INJECTION WAS ALL IT TOOK TO PUT ME BACK IN MY PLACE...



LANA AND DAD REALLY HIT IT OFF...



THEY STARTED WORKING ON A PROJECT TOGETHER...LANA MADE A BIG JOKE ABOUT KEEPING IT A SECRET FROM ME...



IT TOOK OVER FIVE YEARS TO COMPLETE...ONE DAY I WAS FINALLY ALLOWED TO GO TO THE WORK SITE...





YOUR FATHER REALLY IS A **GENIUS!** HE THOUGHT UP **EVERYTHING!** COME ON...FIRST WE'RE GOING TO GO VISIT **HEAVEN!**

I WAS IN A DAZE...I LET LANA LEAD ME THROUGH...



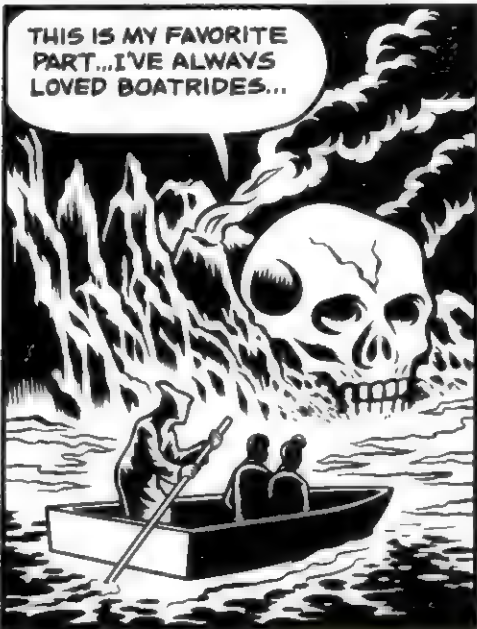
...AND OVER HERE IS WHERE THE ROBOT ANGELS PLAY THEIR HARPS... AREN'T THEY CUTE?

THE FURTHER WE WENT, THE STRANGER IT GOT...



BLISS, I WANT YOU TO MEET **GOD!** HE'S NOT ALL WIRED UP YET, BUT HE ACTUALLY TALKS!

...AND THEN WE WENT TO **HELL.**



THIS IS MY FAVORITE PART...I'VE ALWAYS LOVED BOATRIDES...



...DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU GLAD YOU'RE NOT A SINNER?

I GUESS IT WAS THE SEA OF FIRE THAT FINALLY DID ME IN...



I...I'VE SEEN ENOUGH...LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

GOD'S LI'L ACRE...THE GRAND OPENING WAS TWO WEEKS LATER.. MUCH TO MY ASTONISHMENT IT WAS AN **INSTANT** SUCCESS.

OF COURSE IT WASN'T REALLY **MY** SUCCESS...I WAS JUST A PUPPET...A FIGUREHEAD.



...BUT WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO **AGAIN,** BILLY? IT'S A TWO HOUR WAIT JUST TO GET IN!

I DON'T CARE! I WANNA SEE THOSE PEOPLE **FRY** AGAIN!



WE'VE GROSSED OVER ONE MILLION IN THE FIRST MONTH ALONE! **THINK** OF IT, BLISS!

GUESS YOUR OLD DAD IS SMARTER THAN YOU THOUGHT, EH, BLISS?

DAD WAS PRETTY SMART, AND HE WAS ENJOYING HIS SUCCESS...HE GOT NEW TEETH AND A NEW TOUPEE... DAD WAS LOOKING MIGHTY DAPPER.



...AND LANA WAS STILL AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER...SHE HAD FILLED OUT A BIT, BUT SHE CARRIED IT WELL...



I WAS THE ONE WHO WAS A WRECK... I LOOKED LIKE AN OLD MAN...I LOOKED OLDER THAN MY OWN FATHER!



THE DAYS PASSED SLOWLY AND AS EACH DAY PASSED, MY GRIP ON REALITY GREW WEAKER...AND THEN ONE NIGHT...ONE DARK UGLY NIGHT, MY WHOLE WORLD EXPLODED!



I HAD BEEN OUT ON A MONTH LONG HEALING CRUSADE WHEN I CAUGHT A BAD CASE OF THE FLU...I DECIDED TO COME HOME.



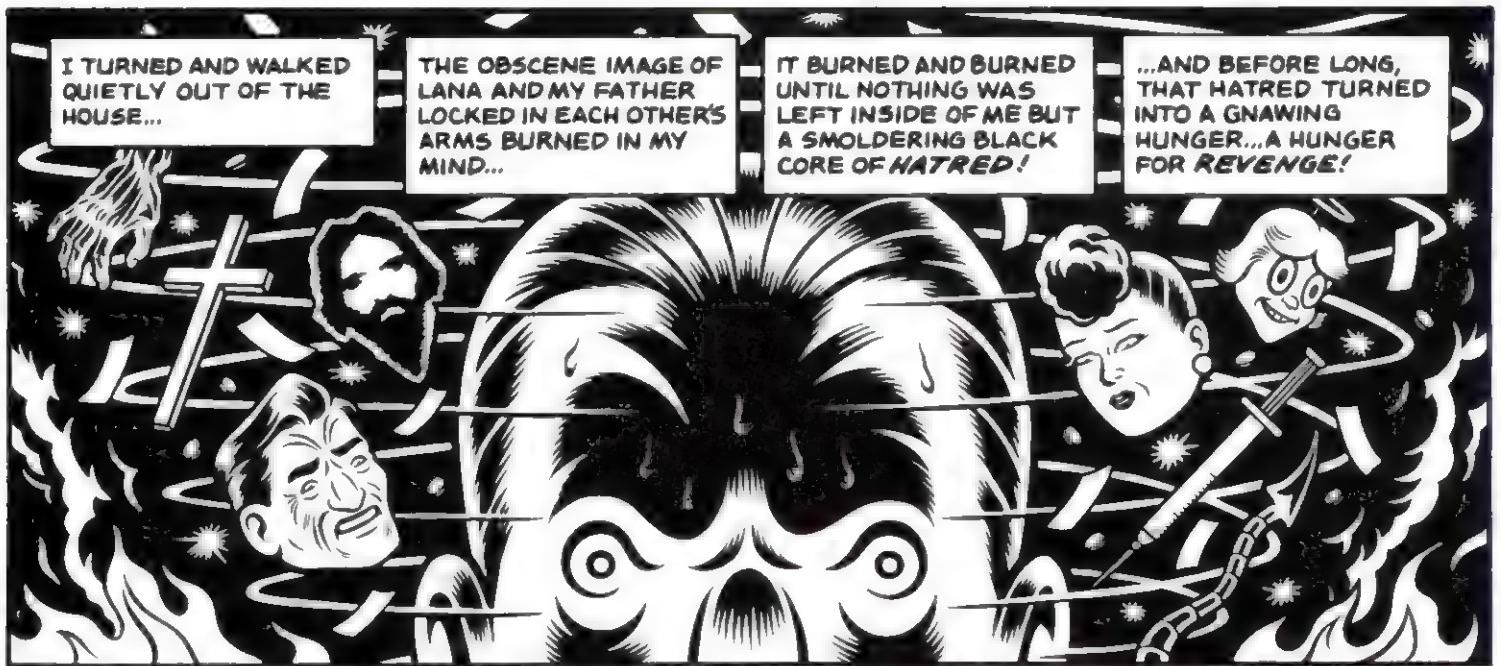
L-LANA?
ARE YOU
HOME?

HA, HA, HA,
HA, HA, HA...



COME HERE,
YOU SWEET THING...





I TURNED AND WALKED QUIETLY OUT OF THE HOUSE...

THE OBSCENE IMAGE OF LANA AND MY FATHER LOCKED IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS BURNED IN MY MIND...

IT BURNED AND BURNED UNTIL NOTHING WAS LEFT INSIDE OF ME BUT A SMOLDERING BLACK CORE OF HATRED!

...AND BEFORE LONG, THAT HATRED TURNED INTO A GNAWING HUNGER...A HUNGER FOR REVENGE!

ABOUT TWO WEEKS LATER, I TOOK LANA AND MY FATHER OUT TO THE BEST RESTAURANT IN TOWN...



WAITER! WE'RE RUNNING LOW ON CHAMPAGNE! BRING ANOTHER BOTTLE!

YES, SIR!



HAVE SOME MORE, LANA... COME ON, DRINK UP!

WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU BLISS? THIS IS SO UNLIKE YOU... I DON'T UNDERSTAND...



DON'T WORRY, DARLING...YOU'LL UNDERSTAND SOON ENOUGH...

BY THE TIME WE LEFT THE RESTAURANT, WE WERE ALL A LITTLE BIT DRUNK... ESPECIALLY LANA.



WHOOO-BOY! I THINK THAT LAST DRINK WENT TO MY HEAD! TAKE US HOME BLISS!

IT TOOK THEM A WHILE TO REALIZE I HAD ANOTHER DESTINATION IN MIND...



HEY! WE'RE GOIN' THE WRONG WAY!

Y-YEAH! WHERE THE HECK ARE WE GOING?

GOD'S LI'L ACRE!



GET OUT! AND KEEP YOUR TRAPS SHUT!

WE TOOK A WALK TO THE SEA OF FIRE... IT WAS THE PERFECT SPOT FOR WHAT I HAD IN MIND...



I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

SWIMMING... I THOUGHT IT WAS A NICE NIGHT FOR A SWIM...

GO AHEAD, DAD... DIVE IN! IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HOT FOR YOU!

PLEASE, BLISS... NO! I'LL LEAVE TOWN! I'LL NEVER BOTHER YOU AGAIN!



THAT'S RIGHT... YOU'LL NEVER BOTHER ME AGAIN!

I WAS IN A DAZE... MY FATHER'S BROKEN BODY LAY SPRAWLED IN FRONT OF ME... THERE WAS BLOOD... BLOOD EVERYWHERE... AND SCREAMING...



I TURNED TOWARDS THE SCREAMING AND FOUND MYSELF STARING INTO LANA'S FACE... I COULD SEE THE REFLECTION OF FLAMES DANCING DEEP INSIDE OF HER EYES...



AS I FIRED MY GUN, HER EYES CLOUDED OVER AND FILLED WITH TEARS... THE FLAMES WERE EXTINGUISHED...



WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? I MANAGED TO PUSH THE BODIES OVER THE LEDGE AND INTO THE SEA OF FIRE...



...AND SPENT THE NEXT HOUR CLEANING UP THE EVIDENCE OF MY HORRIBLE CRIME...



WHEN I WAS FINISHED, I FELT EXHAUSTED... AS I SAT BACK TO CATCH MY BREATH, I NOTICED A STRANGE LIGHT MATERIALIZING ABOVE THE FLAMES...





BEFORE I COULD GATHER MY SENSES, I WAS STANDING FACE TO FACE WITH **GOD!**

AW, JEEZ... I... I **KNEW** I WOULDN'T GET AWAY WITH IT...

MY, MY, **BLISS**... WE'VE BEEN A VERY NAUGHTY BOY, **HAVEN'T WE?**



O.K... ALRIGHT! I **DID IT!** I MURDERED THEM! SO **KILL** ME ALREADY! JUST PUT ME OUT OF MY **MISERY!**



NOT SO FAST, **BLISS**... YOU MAY HAVE SINNED IN THE EYES OF GOD, BUT REMEMBER, GOD WORKS IN **MYSTERIOUS** WAYS... AND I'VE GOT **PLANS** FOR YOU!



GOD HAD PLANS FOR ME, ALRIGHT... PLANS FOR A PROJECT SO ENORMOUS THAT **GOD'S LI'L ACRE** LOOKED PUNY BY COMPARISON...



GOD TALKED FOR HOURS, CAREFULLY OUTLINING EVERY DETAIL...

...AND OF COURSE I'LL HAVE TO GET YOU BLUEPRINTS FOR ALL OF THIS...

WAIT! WHAT IF I **REFUSE?** YOU CAN'T THREATEN ME WITH DEATH! I DON'T **CARE** IF I LIVE OR DIE!



NOW, NOW, **BLISS**... DEATH ISN'T ALL THAT SIMPLE... IF YOU **REFUSE**, YOU'LL HAVE TO BURN IN HELL FOR ALL ETERNITY...



SO...UH...
THERE REALLY
IS A
HELL?



OH, YES! AND YOU
WOULDN'T LIKE IT AT
ALL! IT'S SORT OF
LIKE BEING DROPPED
INTO A BED OF
MOLTEN LAVA...



...ONLY A LOT,
LOT
HOTTER!



I SEE...
WHEN DO I
GET
STARTED?



I GOT STARTED
IMMEDIATELY!...AND
FOR OVER FOUR YEARS
I'VE BEEN WORKING
CONSTANTLY...NEVER
DARING TO SLOW DOWN!



...BECAUSE THE FINAL DAYS ARE
UPON US, AND **HE'S** WATCHING EVERY
MOVE I MAKE!



...AND ONLY **HE** CAN SAVE ME FROM
THE TORMENTS OF **HELL!**



RING!

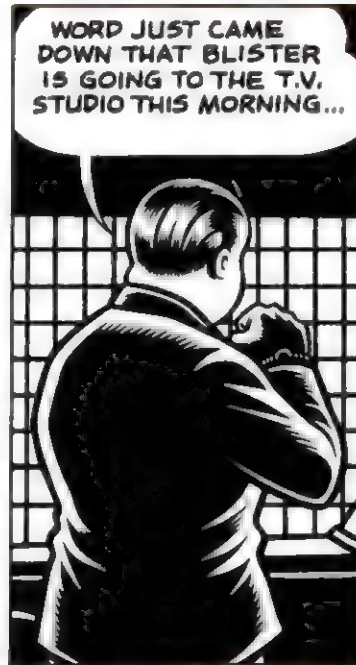
W-WHAT?
WHAT
IS IT?

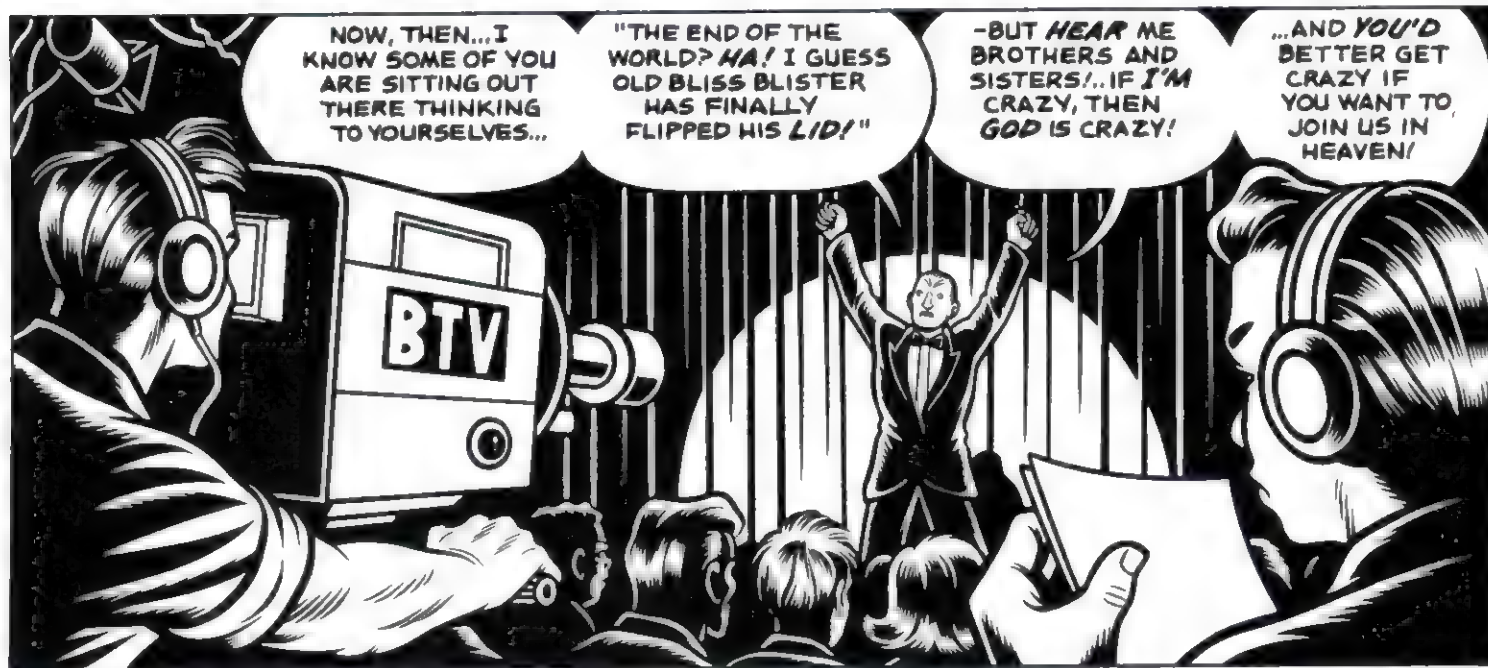


YOUR WAKE-UP
CALL, SIR! WE
HAVE A BUSY DAY
AHEAD OF US!



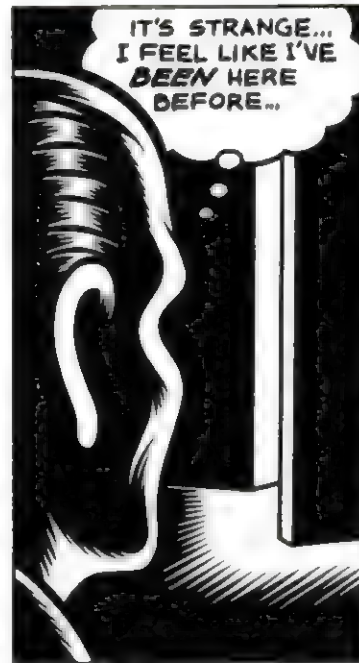
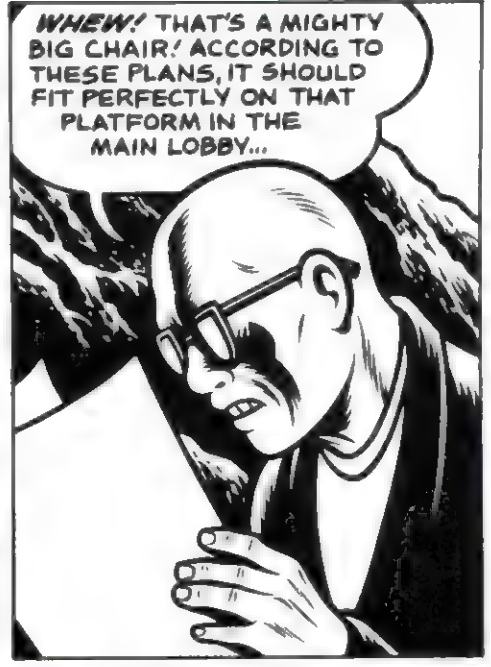
BUT I JUST...NEVER
MIND, RUPERT...I'LL
BE DOWN IN A
MOMENT.

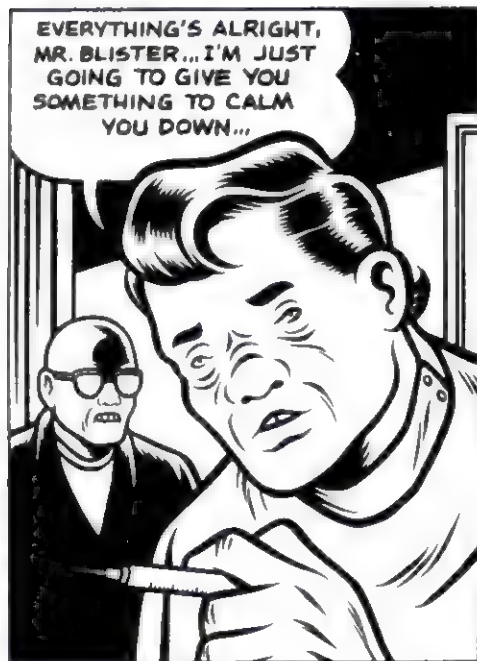






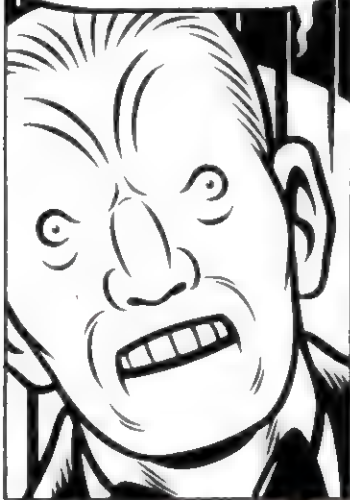






LATER THAT EVENING...

...SO REMEMBER THE DATE, MY FRIENDS...
JUNE FIRST!



FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO CHOOSE TO JOIN US, IT WILL BE A DAY OF JOYOUS CELEBRATION...



...IT WILL BE THE DAY WE MEET OUR MOST MERCIFUL MASTER!



...AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DO *NOT* HEED MY WORDS, IT WILL SIMPLY BE... THE END!



WELL, THERE YOU HAVE IT, GENTLEMEN...

JEEZ, THAT GUY SOUNDS LIKE A REAL NUT CASE, CHIEF!



MAYBE SO, BUT WE THINK *PART* OF WHAT HE'S SAYING MAY BE TRUE...

HUH?



WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT BLISS BLISTER HAS MADE CONTACT WITH A... AN ALIEN BEING!



NOW, BEFORE YOU START CALLING *ME* A NUTCASE, I WANT YOU TO TAKE A LOOK AT A LITTLE HISTORY LESSON WE'VE COOKED UP...



ALL OF THIS INFO HAS BEEN PIECED TOGETHER BY OUR FIELD AGENTS AND THE THINK TANK BOYS DOWN IN ZED COM...



SOMEONE GET THE LIGHTS...

-AND HEY, IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT EVERYTHING YOU SEE AND HEAR TONIGHT IS *STRICTLY* TOP SECRET!



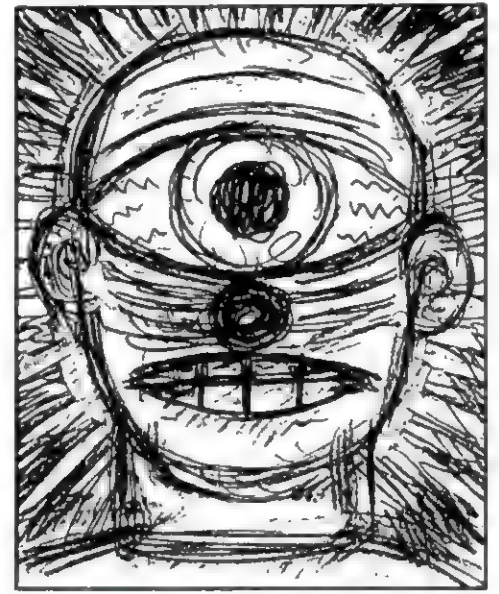
O.K., THE MAN YOU'RE LOOKING AT IS CARL HARDLY OF DEAD RIVER, NEBRASKA...



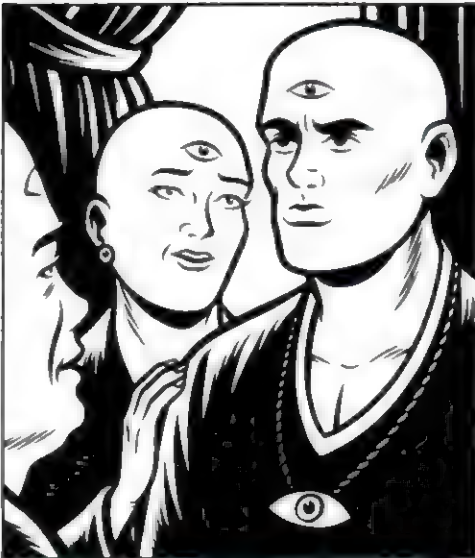
ON A FALL AFTERNOON, ABOUT TWELVE YEARS AGO, CARL WAS OUT CHOPPING WOOD IN HIS BACK YARD, WHEN HE SAW WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS "WEIRD LIGHTS"...



THIS IS A DRAWING HE MADE OF AN ALIEN BEING HE CLAIMS TO HAVE SEEN EMERGING FROM THE LIGHTS...



SHORTLY AFTER CARL'S ALLEGED ALIEN SIGHTING, HE QUIT HIS JOB AND STARTED UP A RELIGIOUS CULT CALLED "THE MYSTIC EYES"...



WITHIN SIX MONTHS, HE AND HIS HANDFUL OF FOLLOWERS WERE ARRESTED ON CHARGES RANGING FROM INDECENT EXPOSURE TO FIRST DEGREE MURDER...



NEXT, WE HAVE VERA BELLOW OF DEARBORN, NEW JERSEY... AROUND TEN YEARS AGO VERA TELEPHONED THE DEARBORN TIMES AND TOLD REPORTERS ABOUT HER "VISIT" WITH AN ALIEN BEING...



SHE CLAIMED THAT A "HUGE GLOWING MAN WITH ONE EYE" APPEARED IN HER BEDROOM AND HAD "INTIMATE RELATIONS" WITH HER...



SHE EVENTUALLY GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY BOY WHO SHE INSISTED WAS THE SON OF GOD...



THIS IS A PHOTO OF HER SON TAKEN A FEW YEARS AGO... HE APPEARS TO BE A NORMAL, HEALTHY CHILD IN EVERY WAY...



NOW WE COME TO KARMEN REESEY, A COMIC BOOK ARTIST BASED IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON...



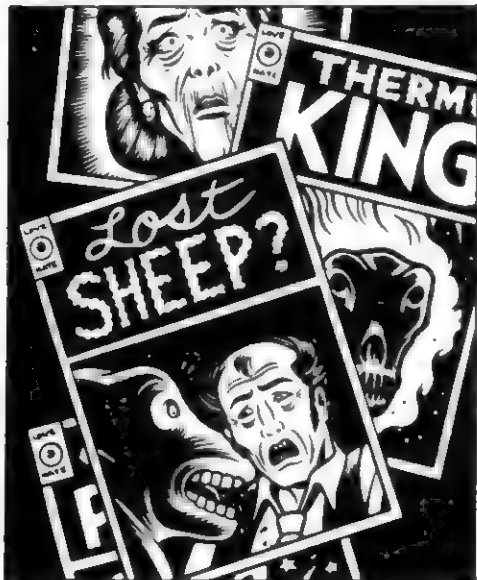
HE TOO, CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN VISITED BY A HUGE, GOD-LIKE BEING WITH ONE EYE...



ALTHOUGH HE CONTINUED TO WORK FOR THE *TINY TOT* COMIC BOOK COMPANY, HIS STORIES BEGAN TO BE A LITTLE TOO *BIZARRE* FOR THE AVERAGE READER...



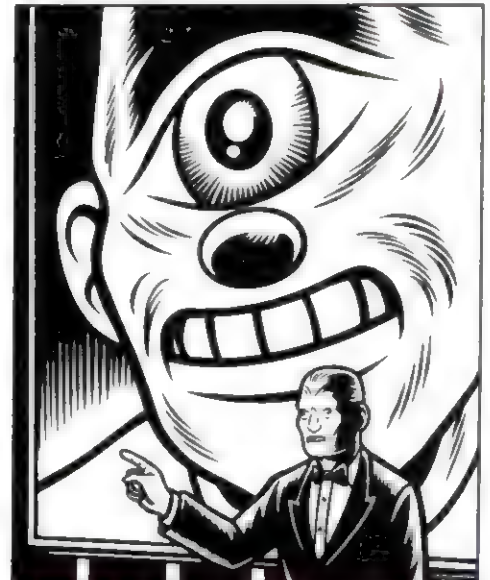
HIS EDITORS FINALLY GOT FED UP AND GAVE HIM THE BOOT...CURRENTLY HE'S PUBLISHING A SERIES OF RELIGIOUS PAMPHLETS IN COMIC FORM...



...AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, WE HAVE BLISS BLISTER...



MR. BLISTER CAME TO OUR ATTENTION ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO WHEN HE ANNOUNCED TO HIS FOLLOWERS THAT HE HAD FINALLY SEEN THE FACE OF GOD..



...AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, HIS CONGREGATION WASN'T TOO THRILLED WITH THE IDEA OF WORSHIPING A ONE EYED GOD...



...AND THEY WERE EVEN *LESS* THRILLED WHEN BLISTER WENT ON TO DESCRIBE A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR *TEMPLE* HE WAS BUILDING HIGH UP IN THE BLACK HILL MOUNTAINS...



WHAT WAS THE *PURPOSE* OF THIS *TEMPLE*? THAT WAS A QUESTION HE REFUSED TO ANSWER... UNTIL *TONIGHT*, THAT IS...



NOW THE WORD'S OUT...
MILLIONS OF TELEVISION
VIEWERS WATCHED BLISS
BLISTER TONIGHT...



...AND I CAN GUARANTEE, THAT
BY TOMORROW MORNING, THERE
WILL BE THOUSANDS...*HUNDREDS*
OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE
STRUGGLING TO REACH THAT
TEMPLE... THAT "HOUSE OF GOD"!



THOUSANDS OF POOR FOOLS
WHO *BELIEVE* THAT ON JUNE FIRST,
THE WORLD IS COMING TO AN END
AND THAT ONLY BLISS BLISTER
CAN OFFER SHELTER
FROM THE STORM!



THE NEXT MORNING...



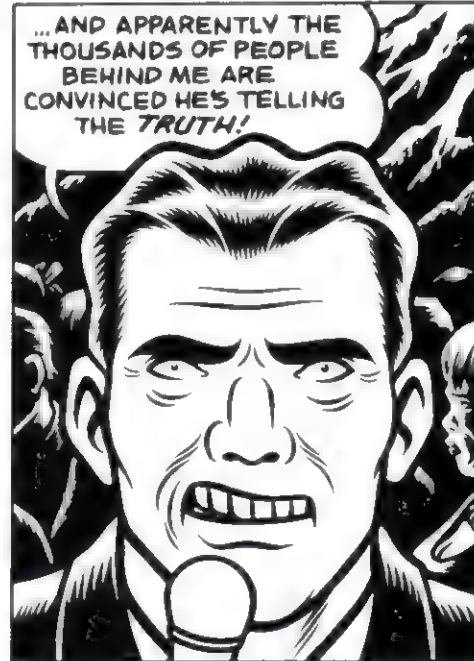
THIS IS BRUCE BABCOCK
REPORTING FROM THE
ENTRANCE OF BLISS
BLISTER'S SO CALLED
"HOUSE OF GOD"...

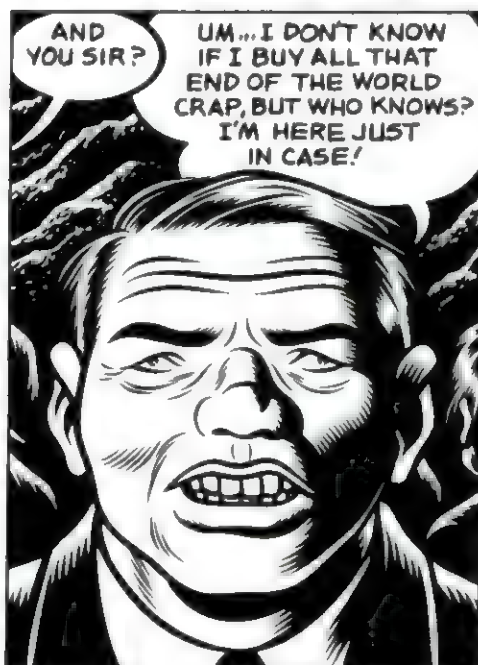


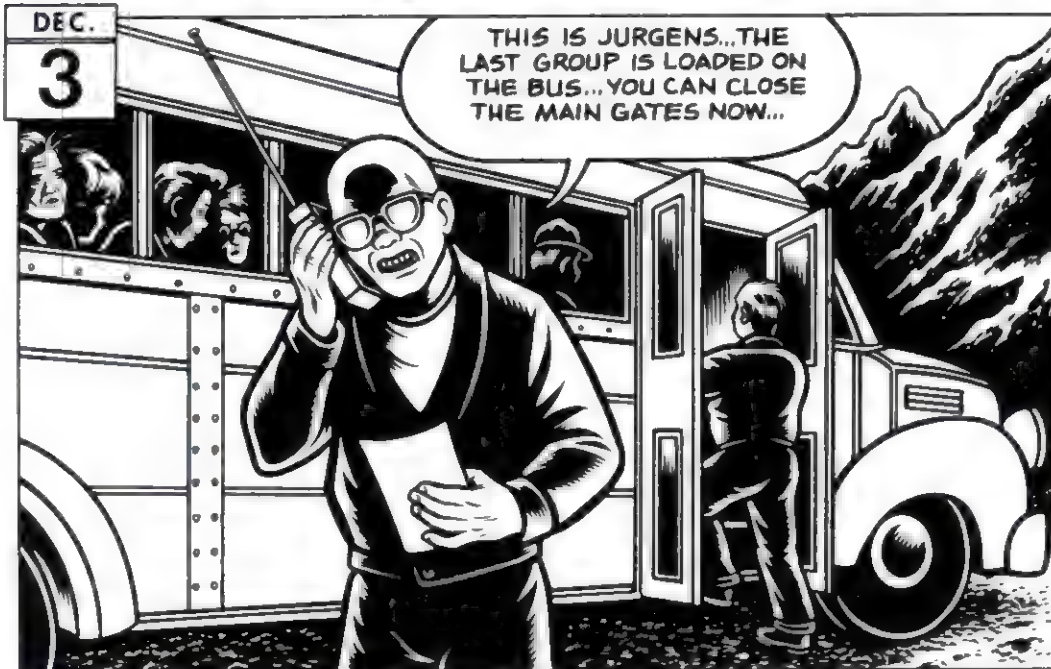
IS THIS ENTRANCE
TRULY A GATEWAY TO
HEAVEN? THAT'S WHAT
BLISS BLISTER WOULD
HAVE US BELIEVE...



...AND APPARENTLY THE
THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE
BEHIND ME ARE
CONVINCED HE'S TELLING
THE TRUTH!

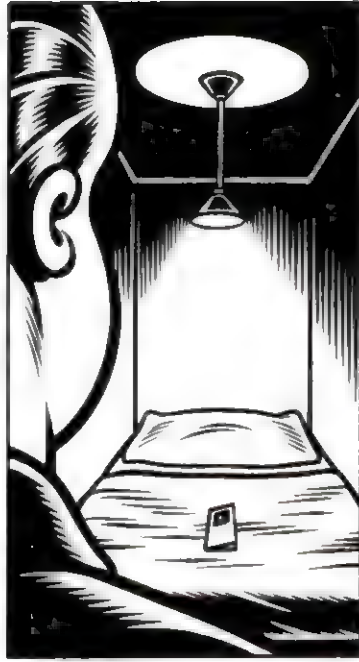




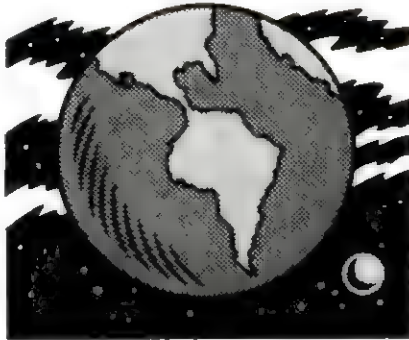








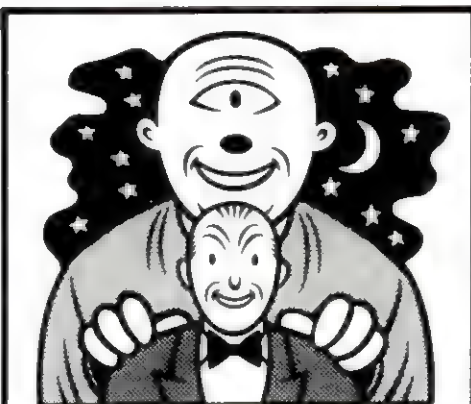
Congratulations! You've **made** it! On behalf of Bliss Blister and the entire staff, we'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to **GOD's** house! This handy little booklet will help you get acquainted with the compound and lay down a few simple ground rules.



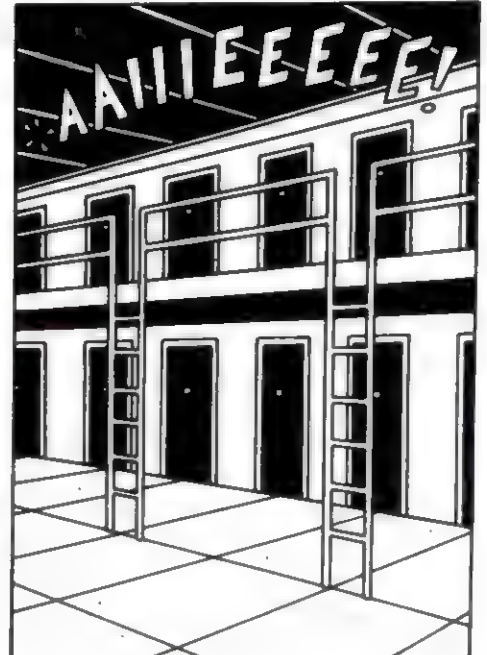
We're going to do everything we can to make your last few months on earth a safe and pleasant experience...but do you know what? There's something **you** can do to help us! You can be a **team** member!

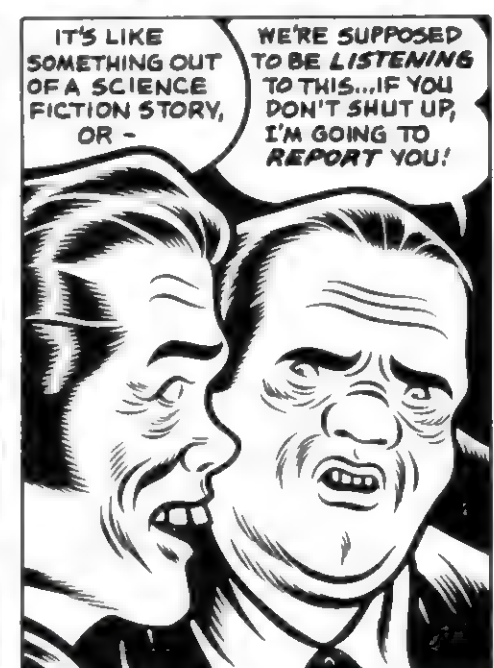
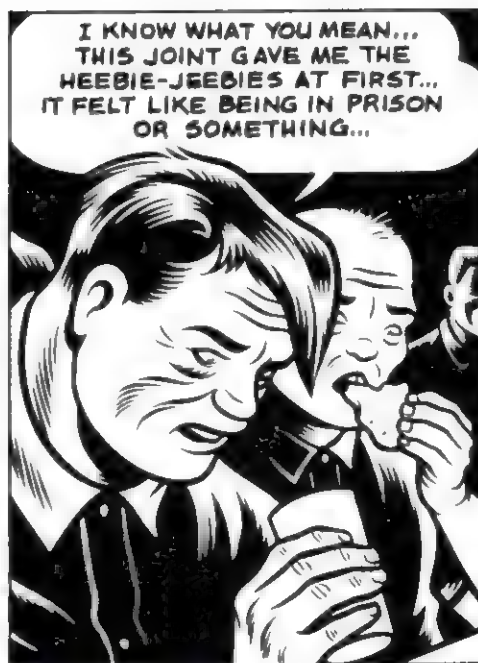
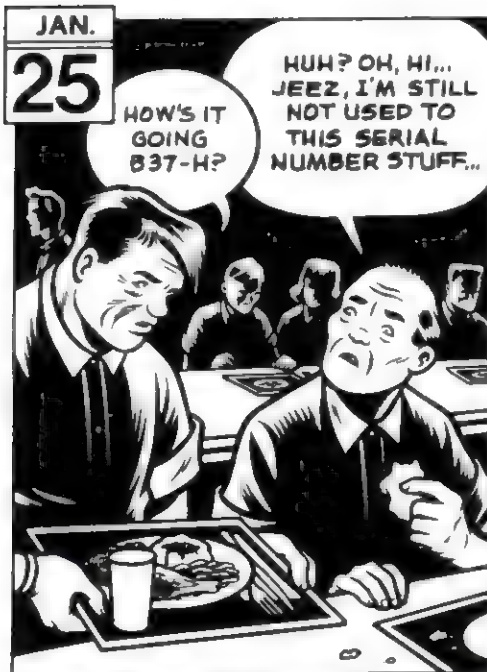


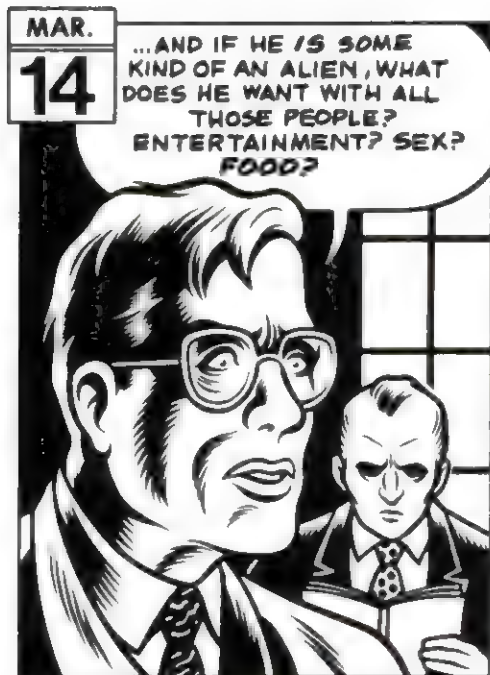
Just like in football or any other sport, it takes **team** effort to win! And if we want to win a place in heaven, we've got to play by the rules! Rule number one is simple: **GOD** is the team captain, so anything **HE** says, goes!



Almighty **GOD** created heaven and earth, but even **GOD** needs a little help every now and then! That's why **HE** placed Bliss Blister and his staff in charge of carrying out **HIS** will!

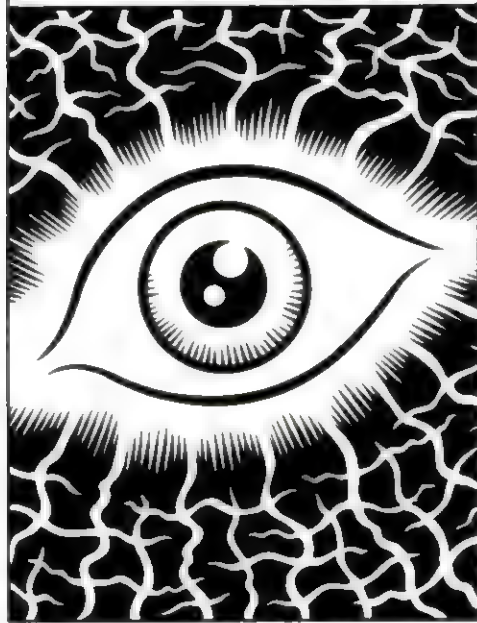








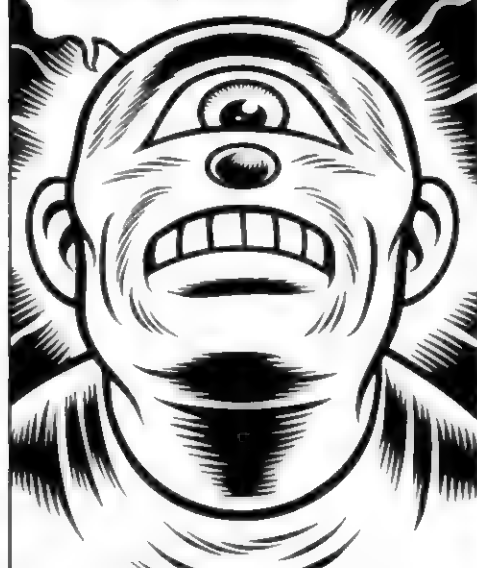
MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE COMPOUND...



GREETINGS,
MY CHILDREN...
THE TIME
HAS COME!



IF ALL IS IN READINESS,
THEN LET THE
LOADING BEGIN!



ATTENTION SECTOR A!
ATTENTION SECTOR A! REPORT
TO THE LOADING DOCK
IMMEDIATELY!



JEEZ...THIS IS
CRAZY! I CAN'T
BELIEVE IT'S REALLY
HAPPENING!

I...I
THINK I'M
GONNA
BE SICK!









YEAH, IT **HURT** ALRIGHT...IT HURT LIKE **HELL!**



I REMEMBER DAD GIVING ME AN INJECTION...IT DIDN'T REALLY STOP THE PAIN, BUT IT MADE THE PAIN A LITTLE LESS FOCUSED...



THE DRUGS MADE **ME** LESS FOCUSED... THEY SMOOTHED THE SHARP EDGES... THEY GAVE ME STRANGE, CRAZY DREAMS...



...BUT MY DREAMS WERE **NOTHING** COMPARED TO THE CRAZY PLANS MY DAD HAD COOKED UP...



IT'S GOING TO BE A **MIRACLE!** A MODERN DAY MIRACLE!



THEY SEE YOU WALKIN' OUT OF THOSE FLAMES WITH THAT BURN ON YOUR CHEST AND THEY'LL ALL BE TRUE BELIEVERS!

BUT **WHY**, DAD? **WHYME?**



LOOK, SON...JUST TRUST YOUR OLD MAN...MAYBE WHEN YOU'RE A LITTLE OLDER YOU'LL UNDERSTAND...

UNDERSTAND? NO...I GUESS THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT I'LL **NEVER** UNDERSTAND...



THE HOUSE WILL BE BURNING, BUT YOU'LL BE SAFE... I **PROMISE!**

I DON'T **WANNA!** I-I'M SCARED!

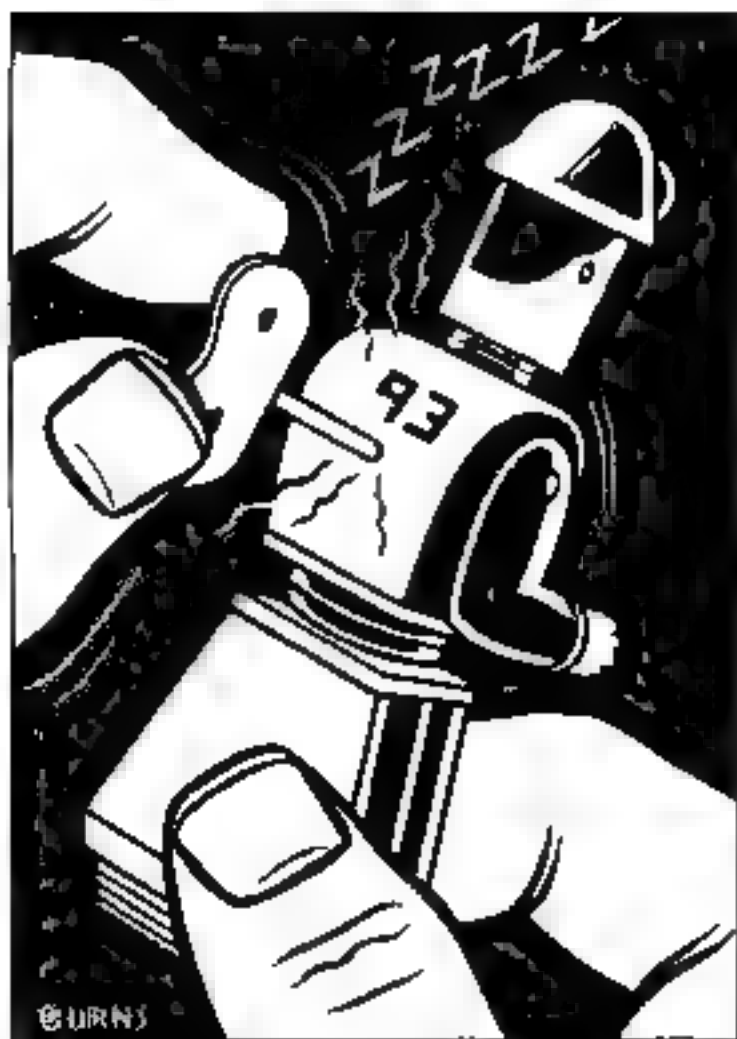
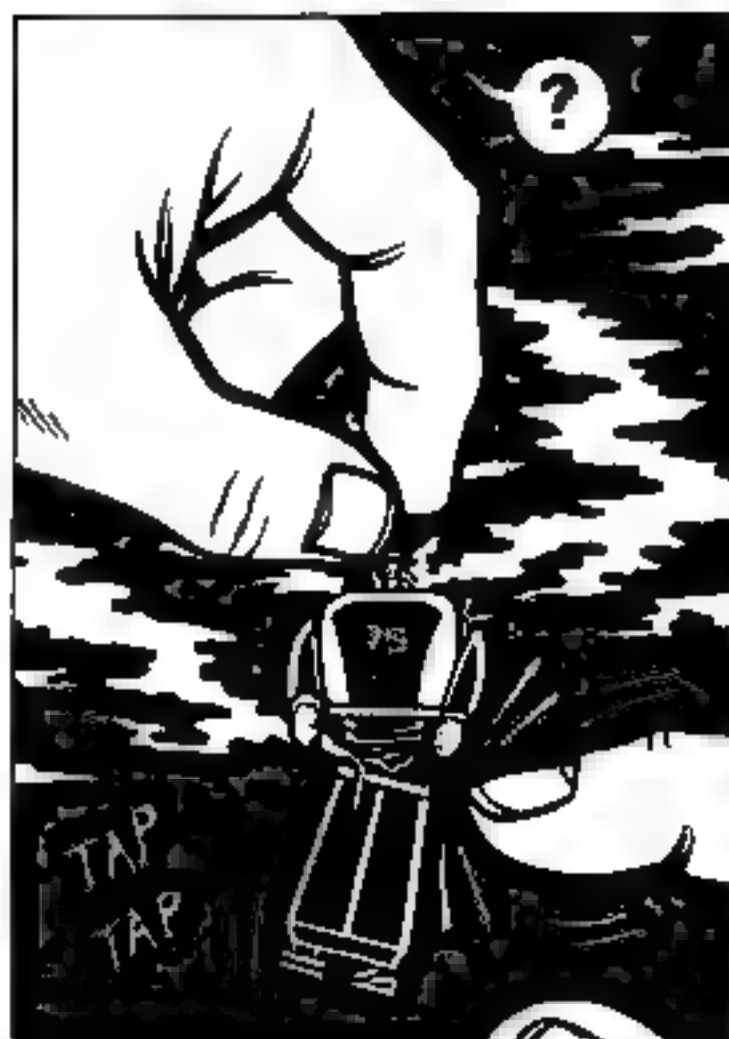
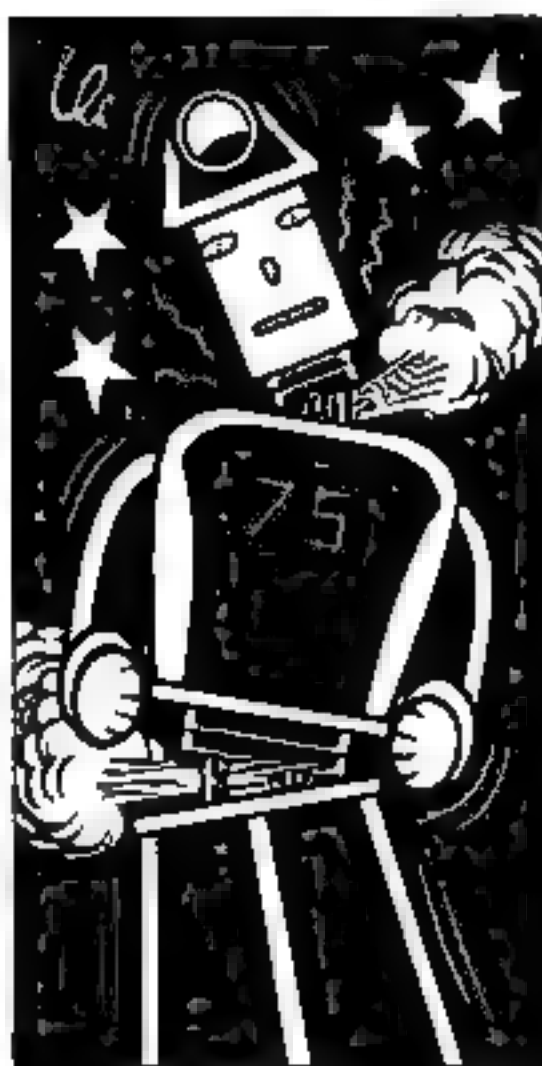
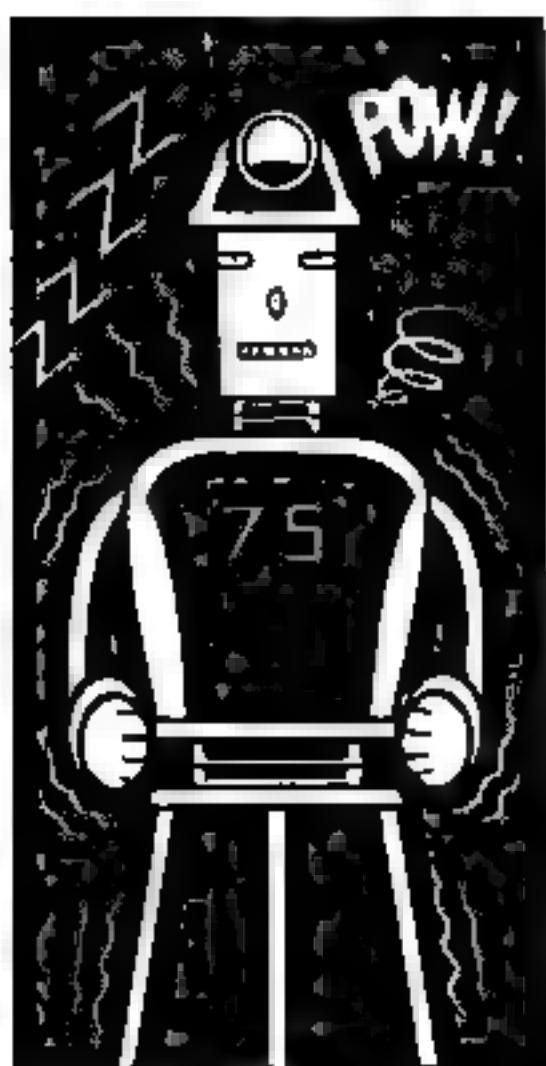
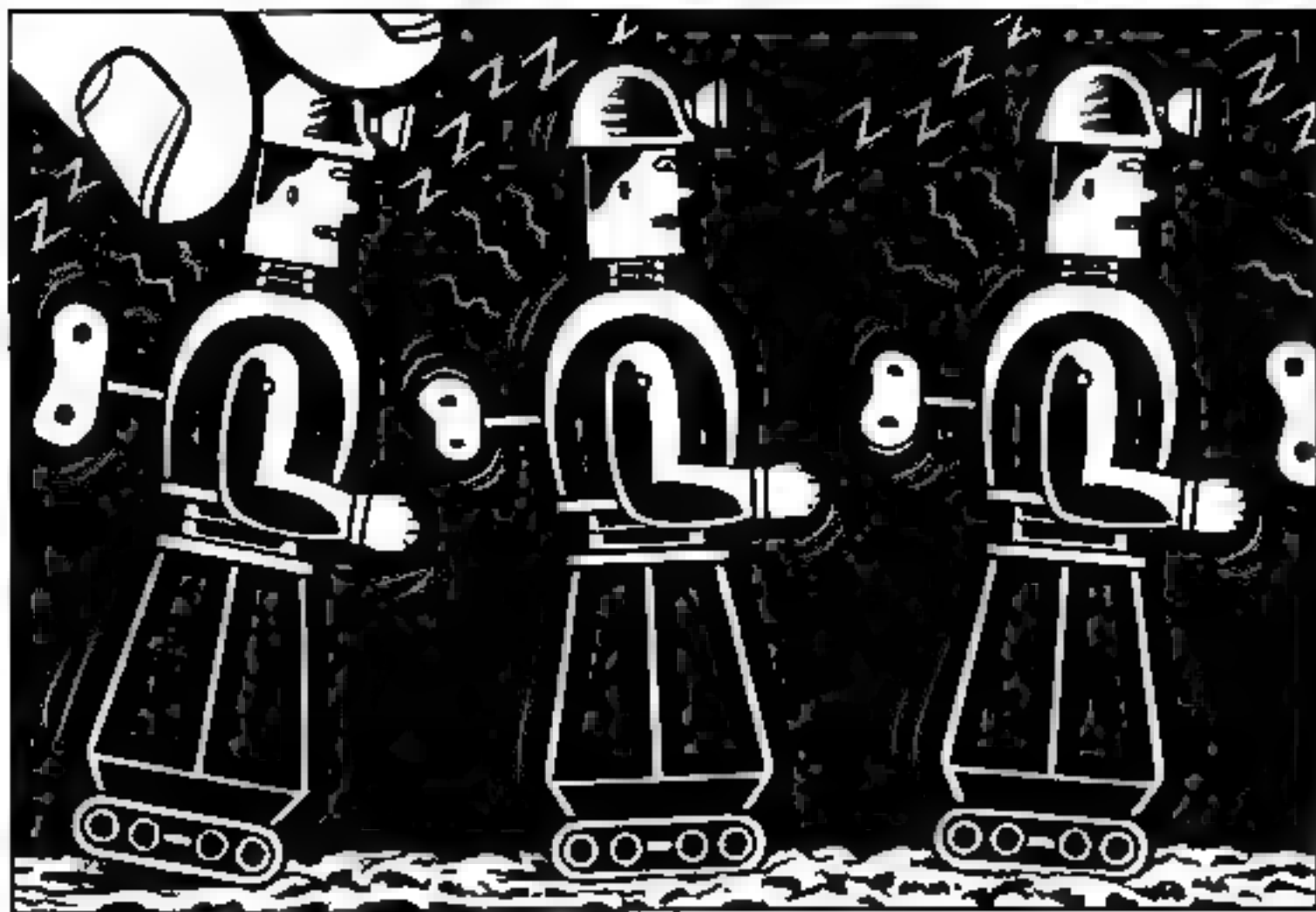
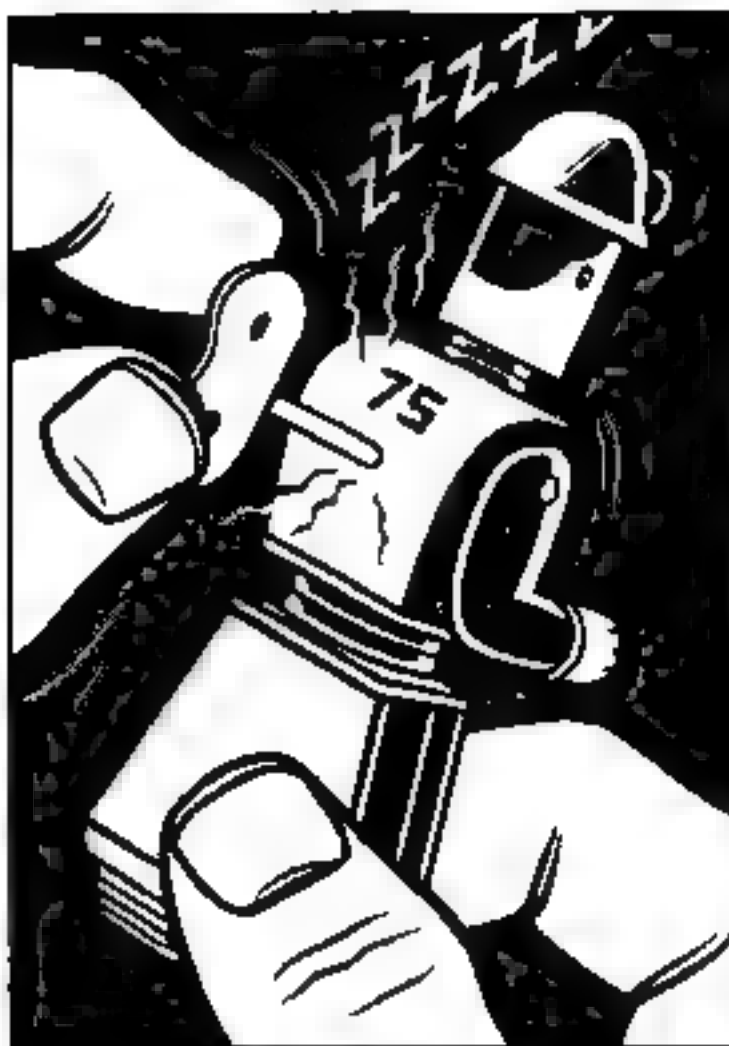


LISTEN! YOU BE A GOOD BOY, AND DO AS I SAY...BECAUSE IF YOU **DON'T** I'LL LET YOU AND THE HOUSE BURN UP!



DAD! LET ME OUT! **DAD!**





C. Burns
PRESENTS: **THE AMAZING MEAT-MAN.®**

SCRIPTER
CHARLES BURNS

PENCILER
C. BURNS

INKER
CHUCKY B.

ERASER
"BURNY" BURNS

WHITE OUTER
"3RD DEGREE" BURNS

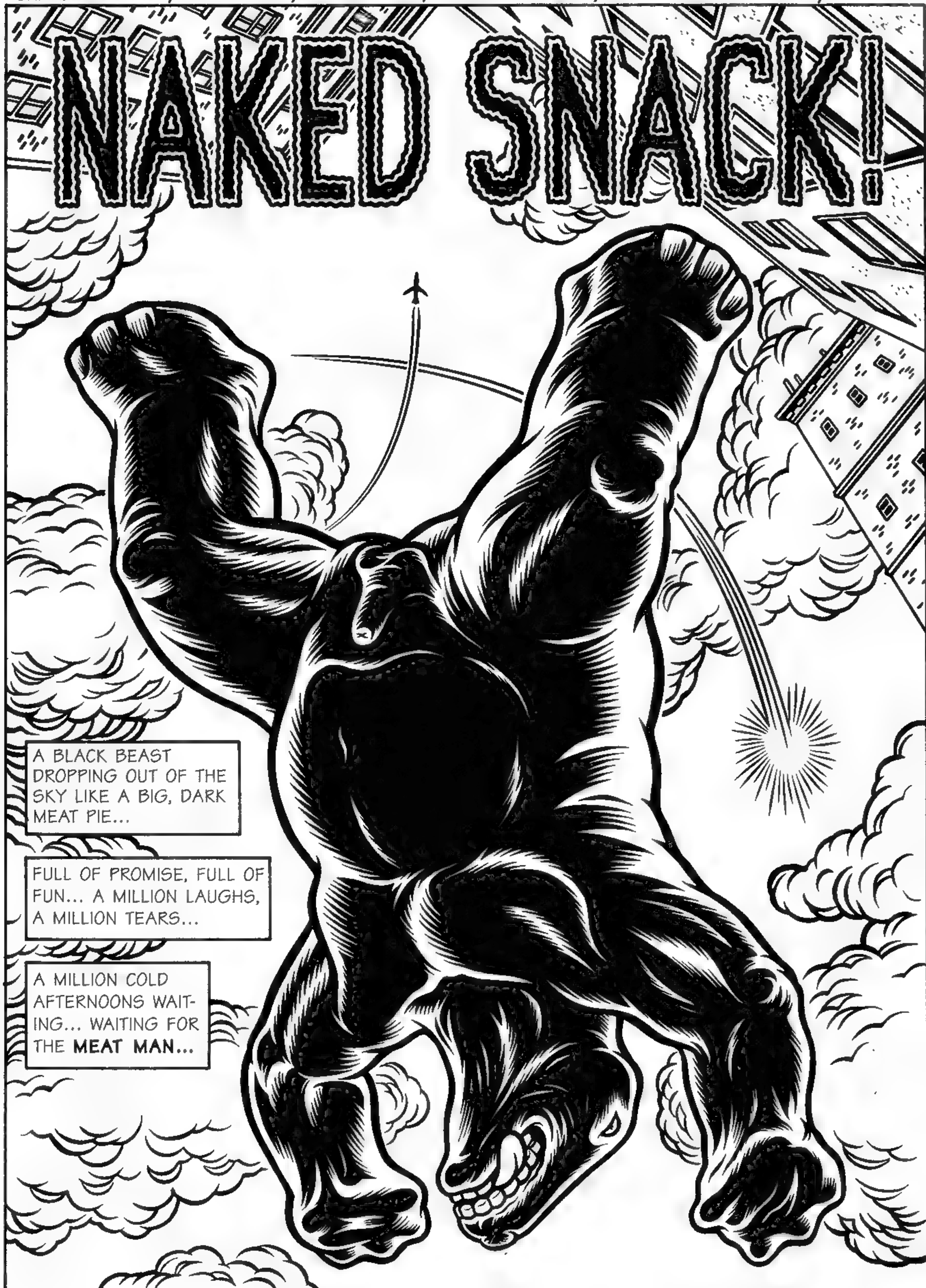
BORDERS
C. R. B.

NAKED SNACK!

A BLACK BEAST
DROPPING OUT OF THE
SKY LIKE A BIG, DARK
MEAT PIE...

FULL OF PROMISE, FULL OF
FUN... A MILLION LAUGHS,
A MILLION TEARS...

A MILLION COLD
AFTERNOONS WAIT-
ING... WAITING FOR
THE **MEAT MAN**...





LATER... THE SKY TURNS GREY, A COLD WIND BLOWS... THE SMELL OF BURNING FLESH FILLS THE AIR...



MEN WITH UNNATURAL HUNGERS WALK THE STREETS...



THIS MUST BE THE PLACE... IF I CAN SELL OUR STASH I'LL BE ROLLING IN DOUGH!

INSIDE... ON THE 99TH FLOOR...

THERE HE IS... **JESUS**, LOOK AT HIM TEAR INTO THAT CORPSE... HE MUST BE OVER THE **EDGE**!

YES...OHH THAT'S IT, BABY... OHH...



UH, EXCUSE ME, BUT I'M LOOKING FOR MR. LIEBER...

UM... GUHH, UFF, OHH...

HUH? WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

YOU CAN CALL ME JOHNNY... I'VE GOT A LITTLE SOMETHING YOU MIGHT BE REAL INTERESTED IN...



YOU A MEAT EATER? WELL, I GOT SOMETHING THAT'LL BLOW YOUR MIND!

W-WHAT? **MEAT?** WHAT KIND IS IT? GOOD SHIT?



IT'S GRADE A1

IT... IT'S NOT **VENUSIAN** IS IT? IF IT'S **VENUSIAN** I'LL JUST **DIE**!

IT IS.

OH... LH... OH, BOY... UHHH...



UHHHH... **AAARRRRRFFFFF!!**

I GUESS YOU'RE INTERESTED...







CALM DOWN, BIG BUDDY... WE'LL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS... I CAN'T LET THIS RUIN MY PLANS... I **CAN'T!**

JUST KEEP THINKIN' ABOUT THAT LITTLE HAMBURGER STAND... SOMEDAY IT'LL ALL BE **MINE!**

DR. XENO PAYS A VISIT TO GRANNY'S PAD...

I'M PRETTY SURE THAT LITTLE PUNK TOOK THE BAIT...

I'LL JUST KEEP IT UP, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, HE'LL FLIP HIS **LID!** - AND WHEN HE DOES, IT'LL BE 'BYE 'BYE GRANNY!

HEH... THAT OLD HAG'S LIVED TOO LONG ALREADY... AND JOHNNY...

I'LL DROP A DIME ON THAT RUNTY BASTARD TOO!

JUST LOOK AT HER... IT'S **DISGUSTING!** DROOLING OVER THAT SLICE OF MEAT... IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ME **SICK!**

...BUT SO WHAT?

I'LL RIDE IT OUT... 'CAUSE MY DAY IS COMING... I'LL BE ON **TOP!**

...I'LL SEW UP THIS DAMN MEAT MARKET TIGHT AS A **DRUM!** I'LL BURY 'EM **ALL!**

FROM HERE ON IN, IT'LL BE DR. XENO... **VENUSIAN MEAT BARON!**

HEY **DOC!** IT'S ANOTHER REPORT!

ACCORDING TO POLICE REPORTS, THESE ARE ALL MEAT RELATED SLAYINGS...

...ER, EXCUSE ME, THIS JUST IN...

A VIDEO REPORT FROM A GROUP CALLING ITSELF THE "V. M. L. A."

... AS A SPOKESBEAST FOR THE VENUSIAN MEAT LIBERATION ARMY, I'M HERE TO WARN YOU... WE **KNOW** WHO'S BEEN EATING US... NOW IT'S **YOUR** TURN TO DIE!

...CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **BUZZ!**



IT'S SERIOUS BUM TRIP MATERIAL... LAST TIME WE SAW THE TABLES BEING TURNED ON A GROUP OF VENUSIAN MEAT-DEALERS... NOW THEY'RE WONDERING IF IT'S **THEIR** TURN TO DIE...



SO WHAT?











THE **END?** ARE YOU **KIDDING?**
LOOK UP! WHAT'S THAT
DROPPING OUT OF THE SKY?

IT'S A LITTLE SNACK AND IT'S
GOT **YOUR** NAME ON IT!

...AND WE'RE NOT TALKIN'
ABOUT **MEATBALLS**, JACK!
THIS HERE'S THE GENUINE
ARTICLE... GRADE A VENUSIAN!

SOMETHING DARK AND
SOOTHING... SOME-
THING CLOSE TO THE
BONE... YOUR VERY OWN
NAKED SNACK!





Pixie MEAT

BY TOM DEHAVEN - GARY PANTER - CHARLES BURNS



FOR THOSE WHO CAME IN LATE -- TO SAVE MR. GOOTCH AND FRED FROM THE *DOOM* OF SLAVERY, DR. PALE TRACKS THE WILY VERMICULA TO THE ISLE OF LOST WORMS...MEANWHILE BUZZ HITS UPON AN IDEA.



TODAY--"PIXIE LUST!" BACK IN PAWNEE, THE YOUNG DRIFTER IS PLAYING FOR KEEPS, UNAWARE THAT KAY, DEFENSELESS AND WEAPONLESS, HAS FALLEN UNDER THE SPELL OF STUEBEN'S AWKWARD KISSES. NEXT: "MULTIPLE MURDER!"



HUMILIATED BY THE EXPOSE IN BOY'S JAZZ MAGAZINE, DR. PALE'S DAUGHTER SPENDS ANOTHER SLEEPLESS NIGHT RECOLLECTING HER *SUMMER OF SHAME*. BLEACH AROMA--OR POSSIBLY THE ODOR OF SPERM--WAFTS THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW FROM THE MYSTERIOUS LAUNDROMAT FAR BELOW.



FLASH! EDD BIGGS, FAMOUS NEWSCASTER, CAN ACTUALLY SEE THE RECENTLY DECEASED-- THAT BRINKS GUARD, FOR EXAMPLE, SEATED ON A CURB WITH A HOLE IN HIS HEAD AND HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. THE NETWORK CALLS IT A "BREAKDOWN." MR. GOOTCH KNOWS BETTER...

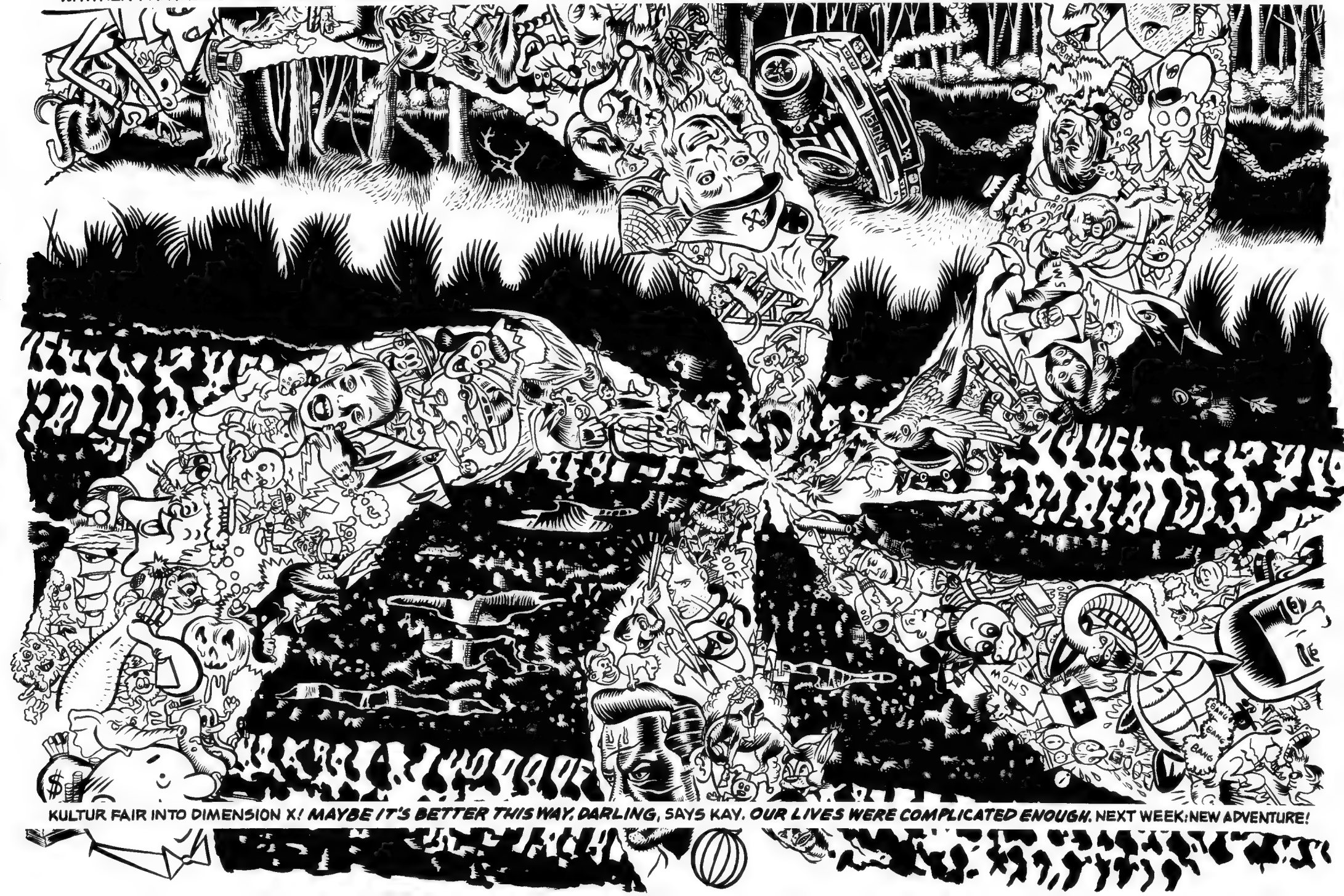


EPISODE NINE : "FIGHTING LEGION!" BEFORE EDD AND FRED AND DR. PALE CAN ARRIVE, A STRANGE MELODY REVERSES THE SEXUAL MAGNETISM--JONES BECOMES SMITH, SMITH BECOMES JONES, AND THE SAVE-MART BURNS! THE RADIOS ARE MELTING, SOMEONE SHOUTS. MELTING! TOMORROW: HOW COME?



WESTY IS STARTLED AWAKE--THAT *DREAM* AGAIN! OR...WAS IT? A MOMENT LATER, THUDS. AND A SIGHT HE'D PRAYED NEVER TO SEE IN PLAINVIEW--VERMICULA'S MILLIONS, ON THE MARCH! QUICKLY, THE BOY FUMBLES FOR HIS CODE-O-MATIC. ZZZZT! RESPOND, MR. GOOTCH, RESPOND!

WITH HER FANTASTIC MEGA-MANIA MACHINE FAILING TO FUNCTION--THANKS TO BUZZ!--VERMICULA CREATES A DIVERSION, PLUNGING **EVERYONE** AT THE



KULTUR FAIR INTO DIMENSION X! *MAYBE IT'S BETTER THIS WAY, DARLING, SAYS KAY. OUR LIVES WERE COMPLICATED ENOUGH. NEXT WEEK: NEW ADVENTURE!*

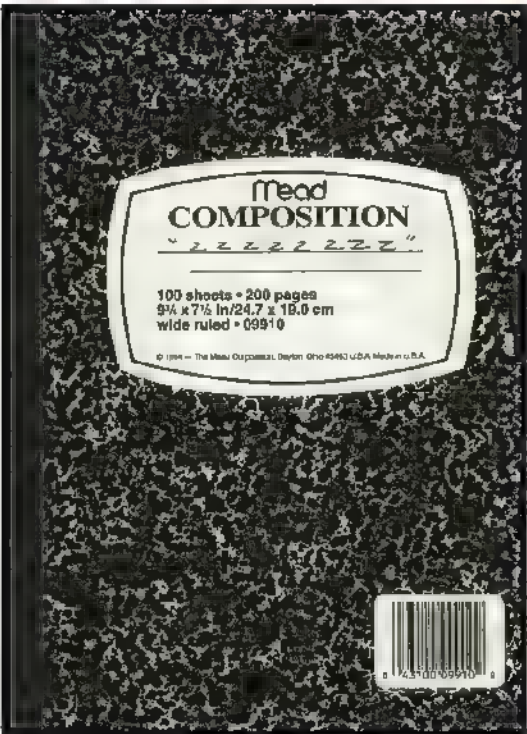


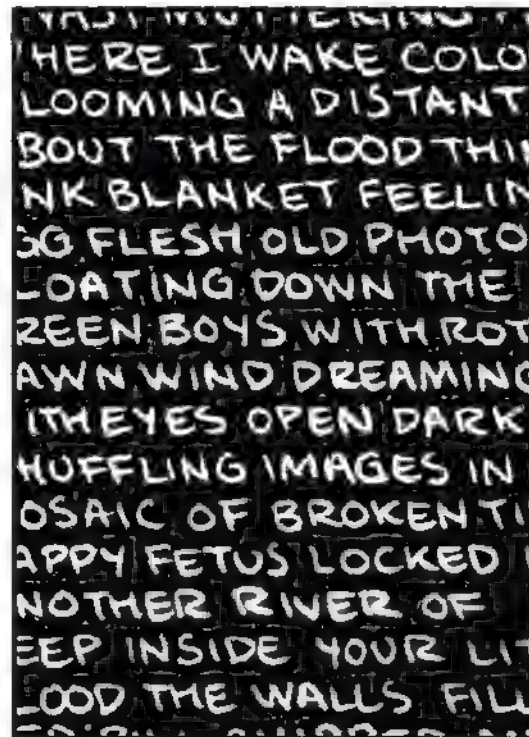
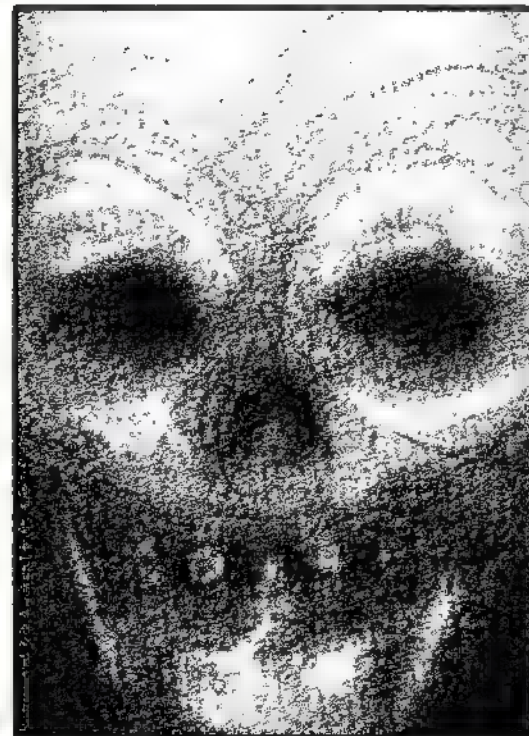
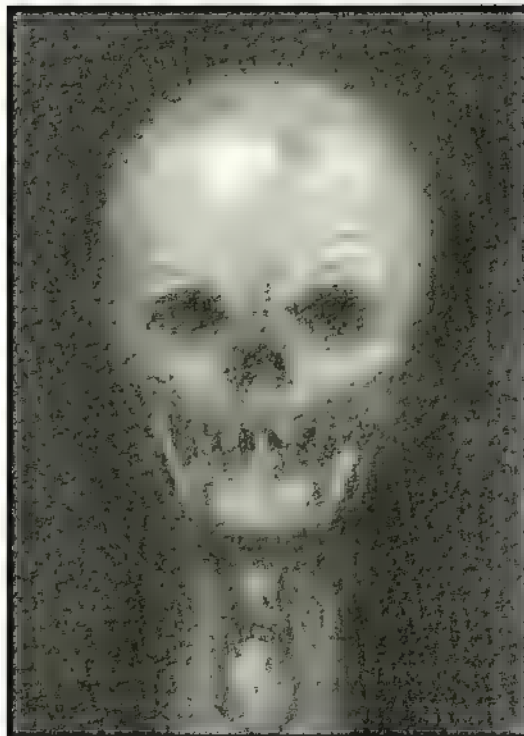


Willis

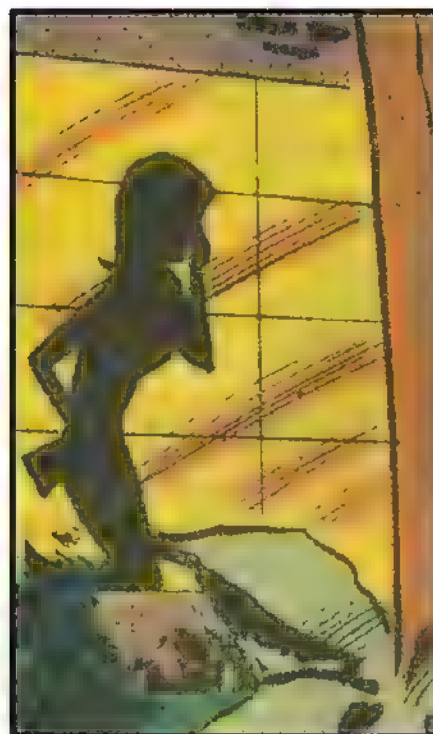
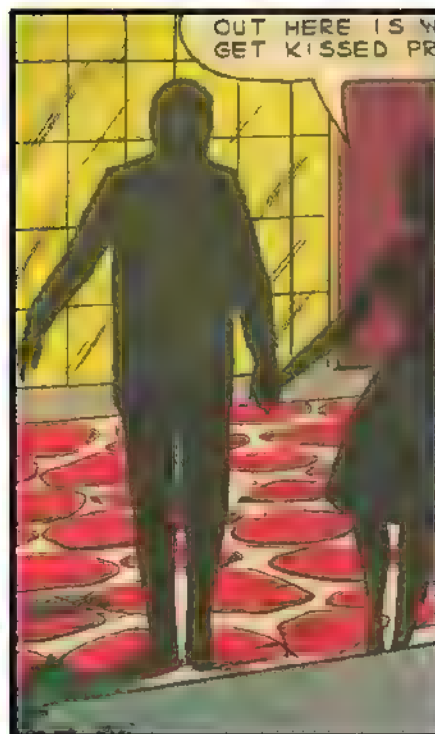
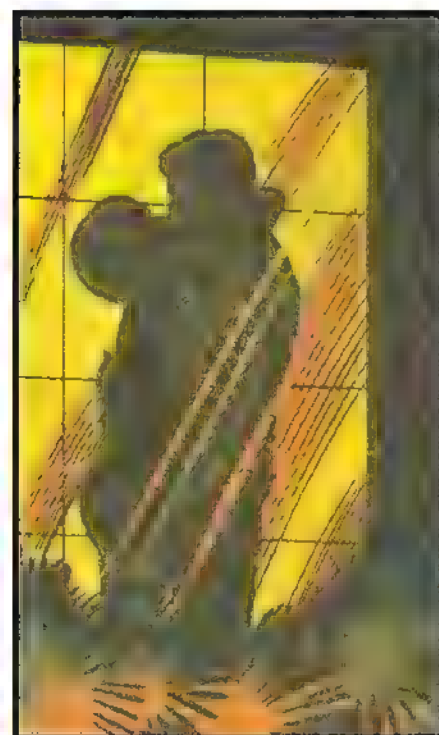
sorry. Faces of The City poured
stained with vile addictions and
ed café was a diving bell, cable
black depths.
ishing his nails on the lapels of
He whistled a little tune through
an effluvia of mold drifted out of
small of deserted locker rooms
with phosphorescent intensity
Fats. I can deliver twenty Need
the twenty eggs in my pocket. I
consummate. One little whoops and
looked at his nails as if he were
you know I always deliver"
and a ten tube advance. This time
A, Fats "
all get one."
down into the Plaza. A street
newspaper in the Sailor's face to
the Sailor's pen. The Sailor walked
pen out and broke it like a nut in
fingers. He pulled out a lead
d of the tube with a little curved
poured out and hung in the air
Sailor's face dissolved. His mouth
in a long tube and sucked in the
g in supersonic peristalsis disap-
link explosion. His face came back

City poured
dictions and
g bell, cable
the lapels of
tune through
ifted out of
ocker rooms.
intensity.
wenty. Need
into focus u
brand of ju
screaming j
"This will
invisible mi
All streets
ing canyons
darkness. W
dwelling cu
others exten
corridors.
At all lev
cars. Catato
burlap and
painted in
arabesques o



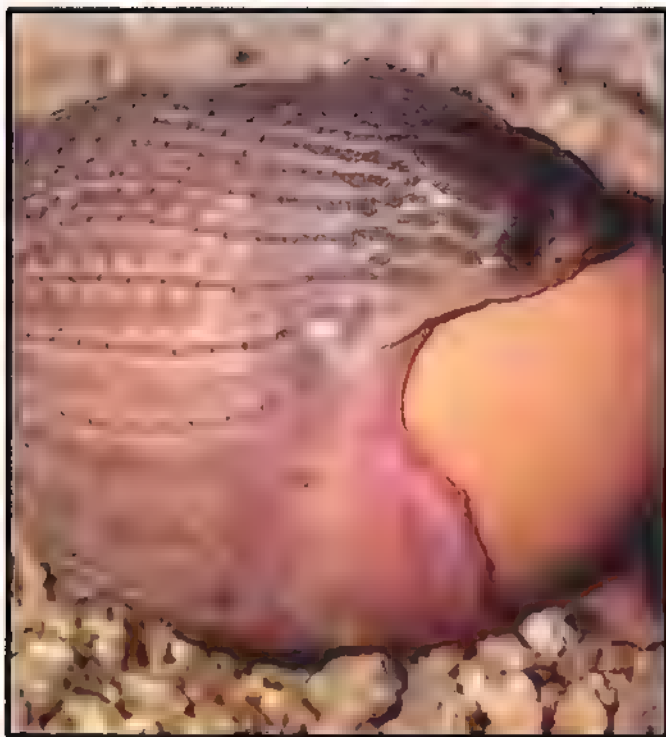


SHE WAS
INTO
ROMANCE
COMICS.

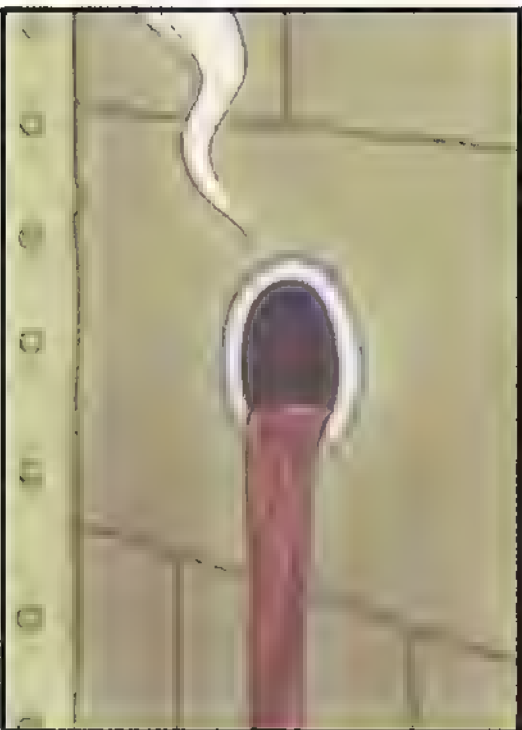
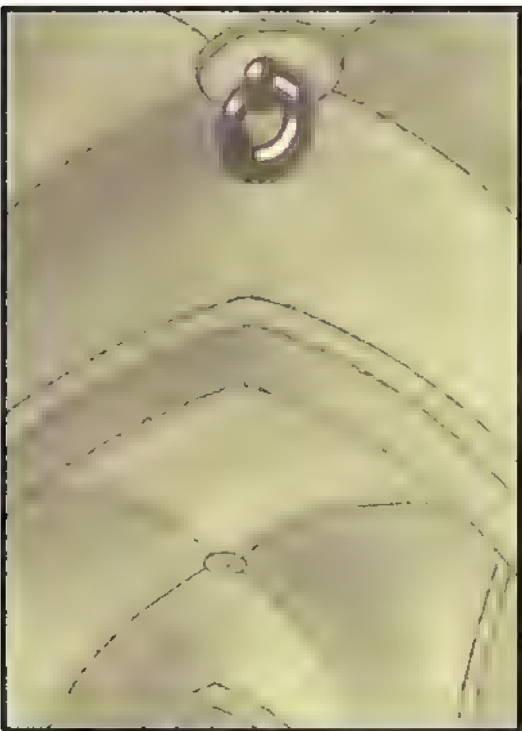


SHE HAD
A LITTLE
STACK OF
THEM
THAT SHE'D
PULL OUT
AND READ
BEFORE
GOING TO
BED

IT WAS
LIKE
WATCHING
THOSE FILMS
IN SCIENCE
CLASS
WHERE THE
SNAKE EATS
THE EGG...

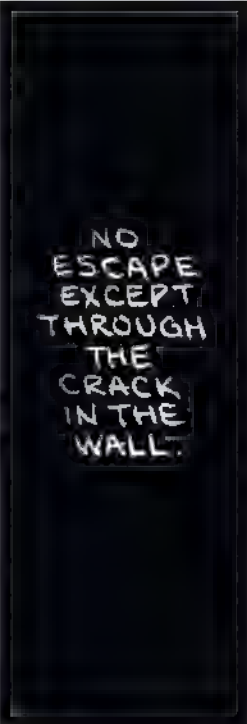
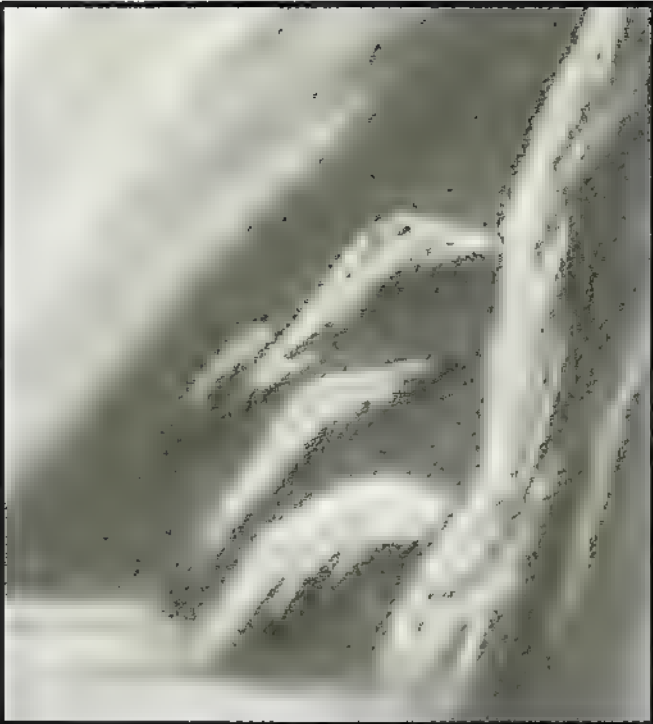


ONLY IN
REVERSE

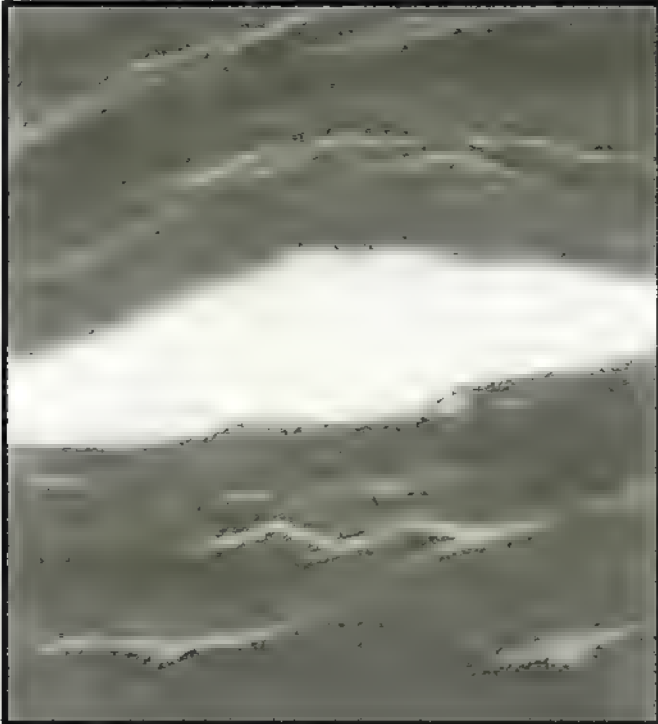




A
RISING
TIDE.



NO
ESCAPE
EXCEPT
THROUGH
THE
CRACK
IN THE
WALL.



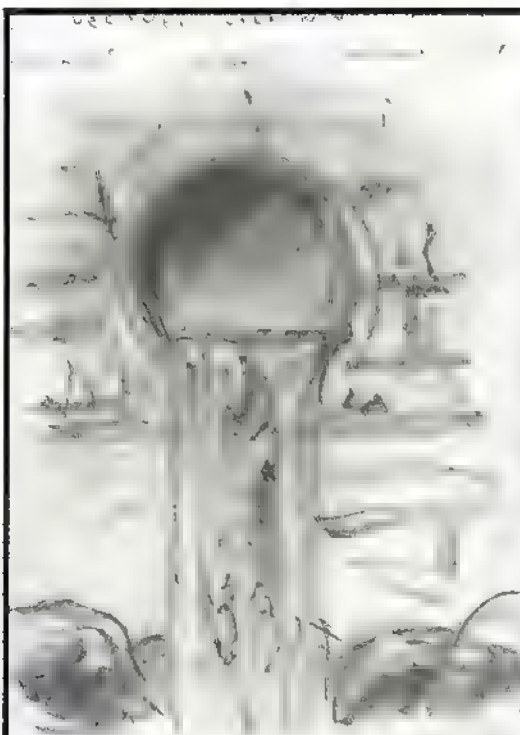
I KEEP
DRAWING
THESE
IMAGES
OVER AND
OVER
AGAIN...



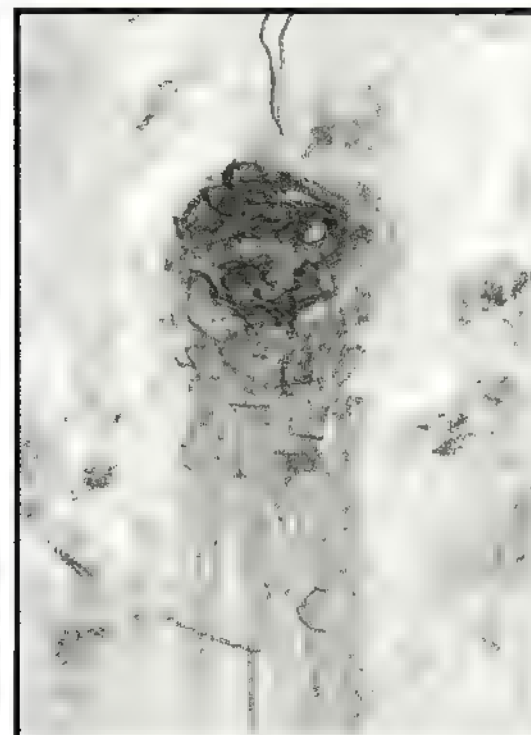
THE
WALKING
FETAL PIG,
DRAGGING
HIS
UMBILICAL
CORD...



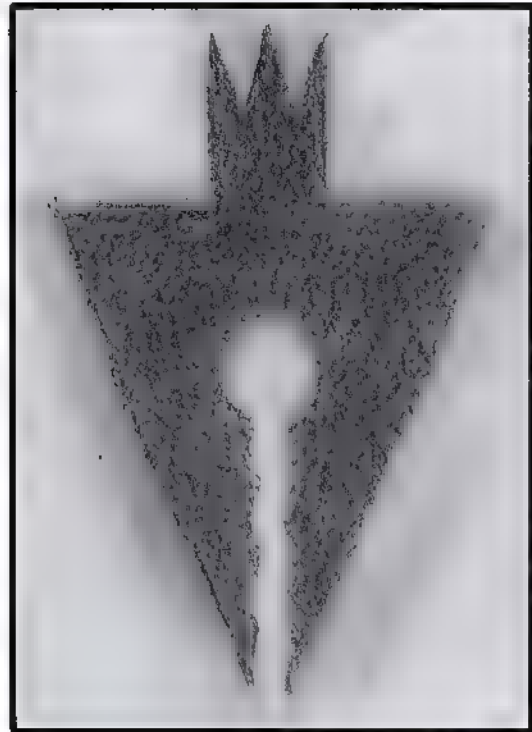
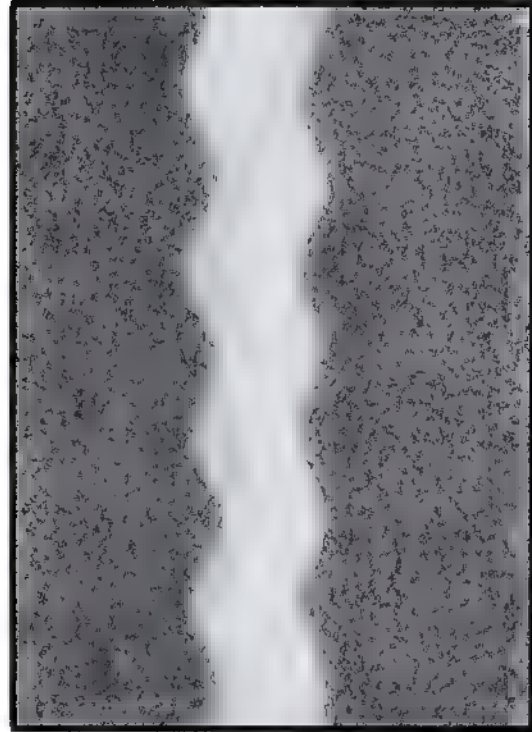
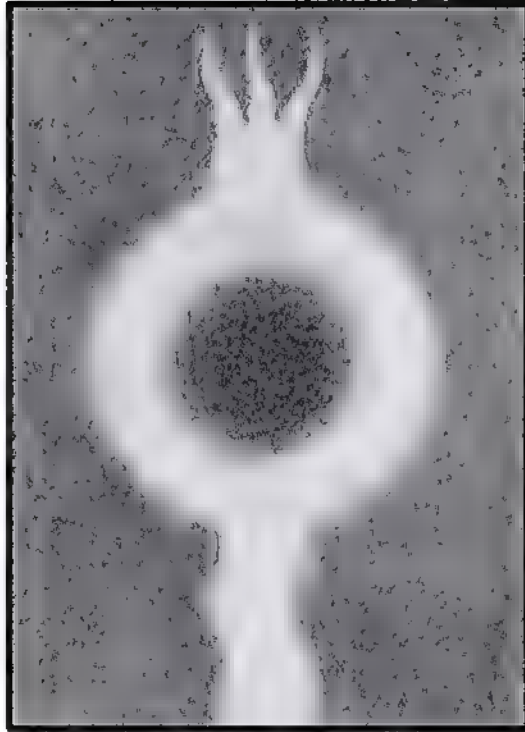
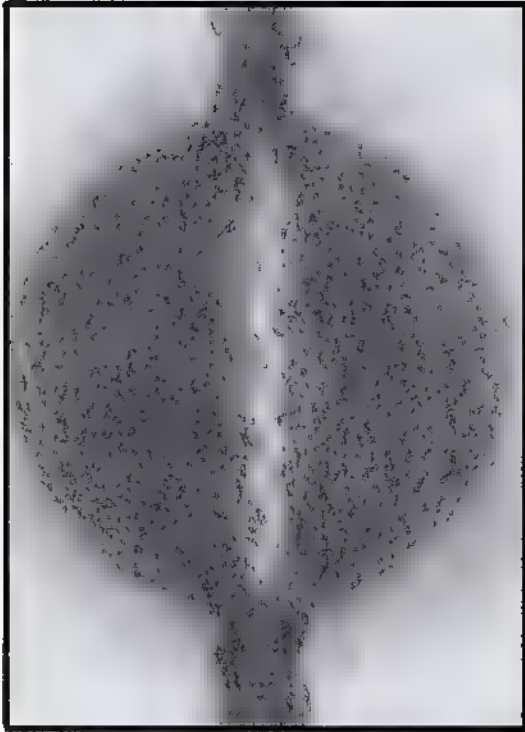
...AND A
WASTE PIPE
DUMPING
RAW
SEWAGE
INTO A
HUGE
RIVER.



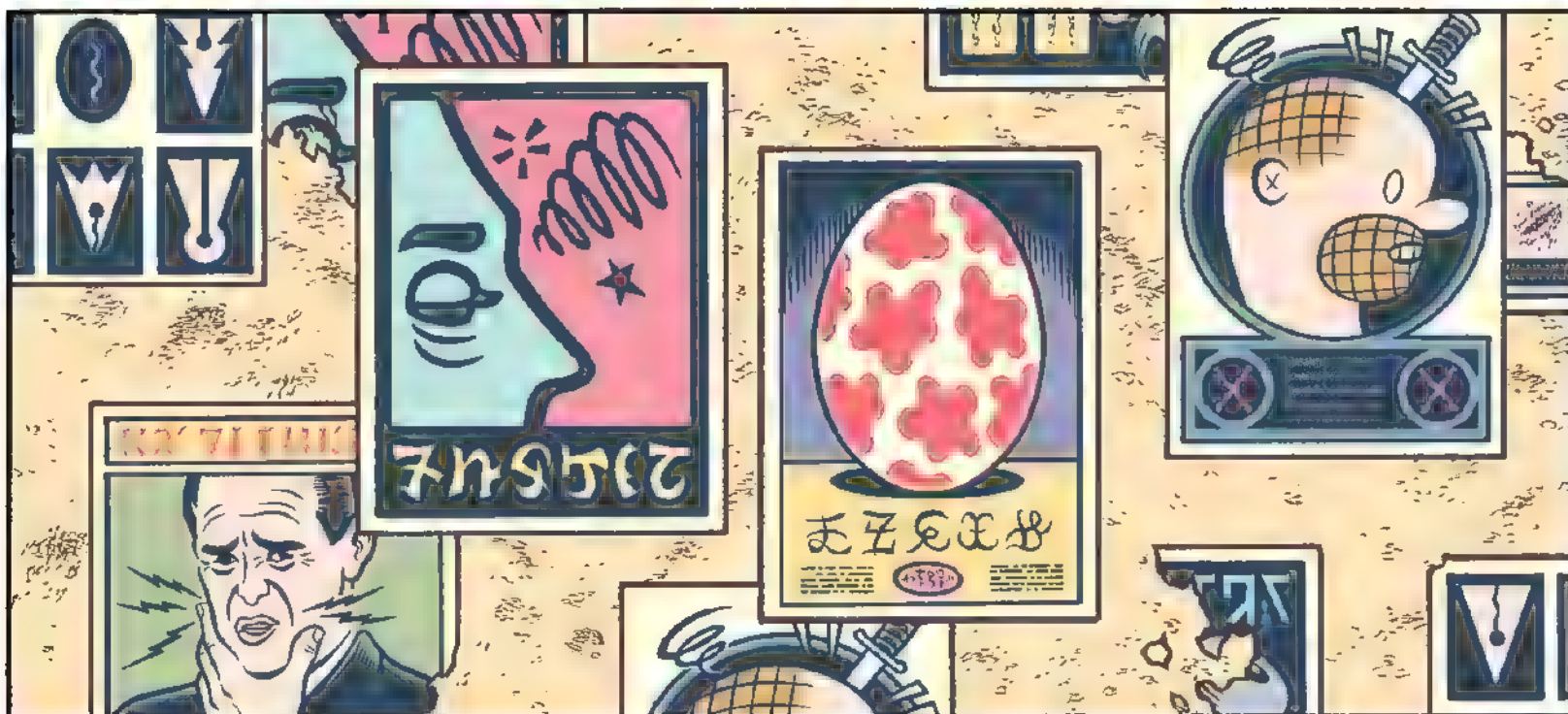
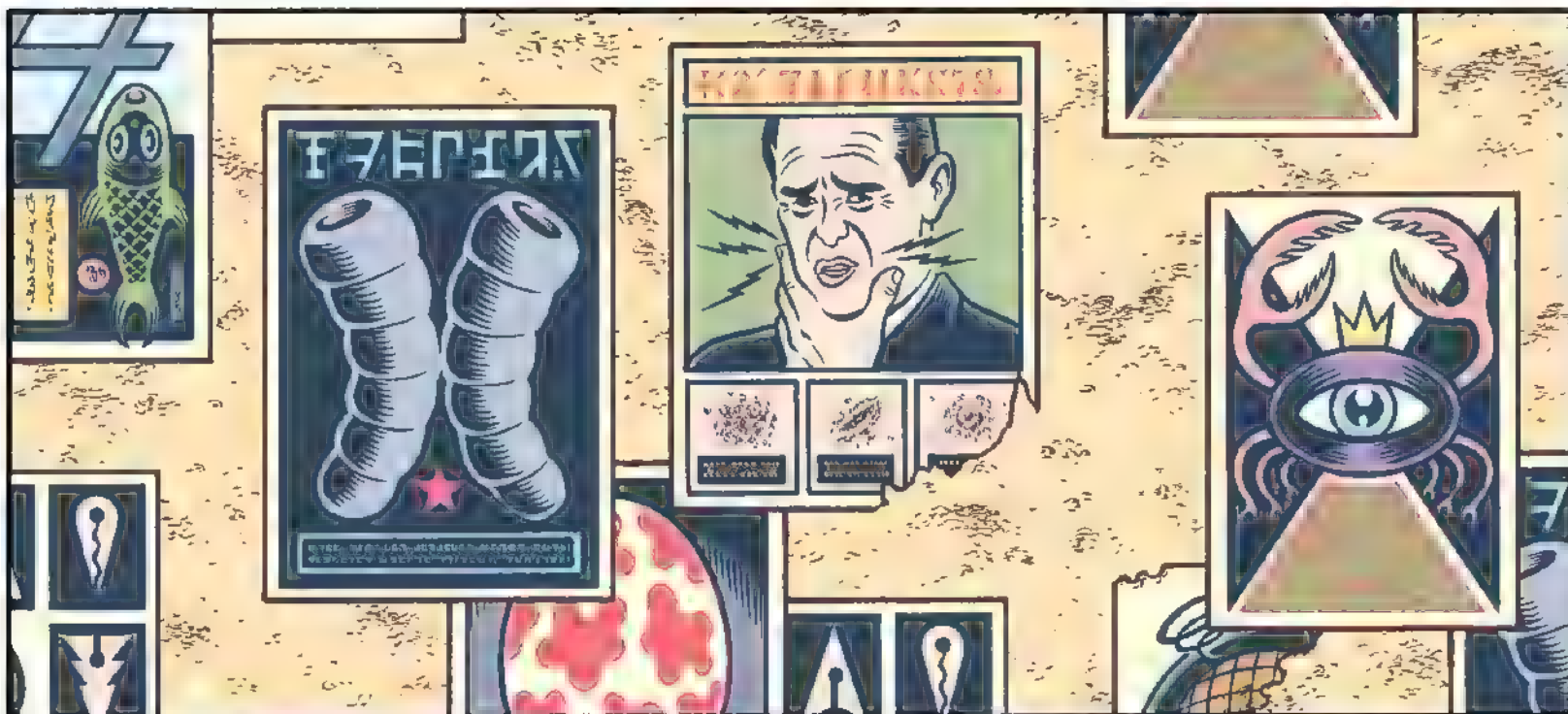
WHY?
WHERE'D
THEY
COME
FROM?



RANDOM ACCESS

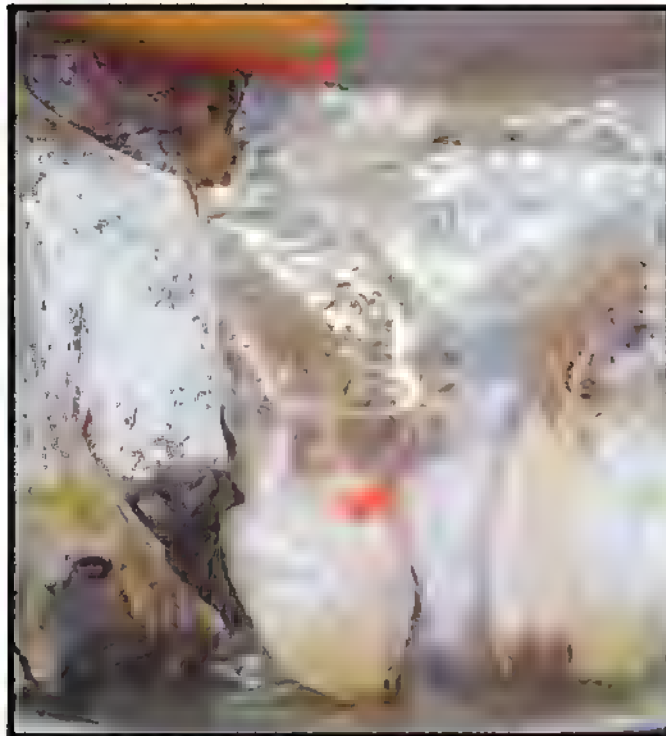


BY CHARLES BURNS





WALKING
HOME
THROUGH
CHINATOWN...
THE DRUGS
STILL
WORKING.

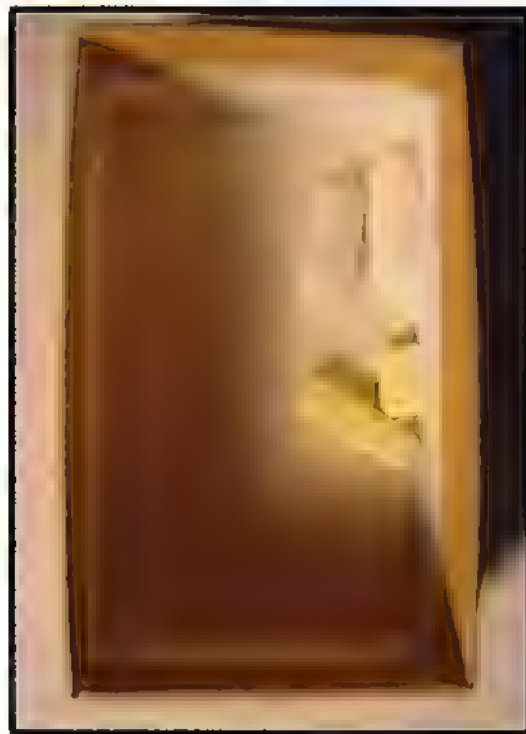
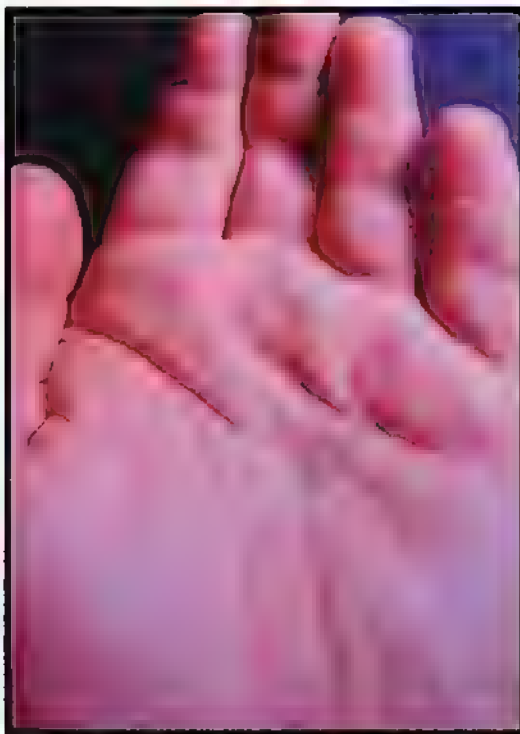
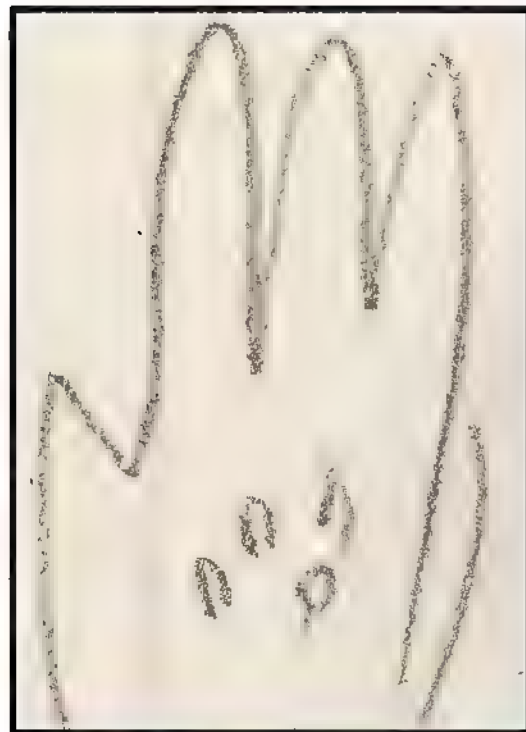


EVERYTHING
BRIGHT
AND SHARP
AND
AMAZING.

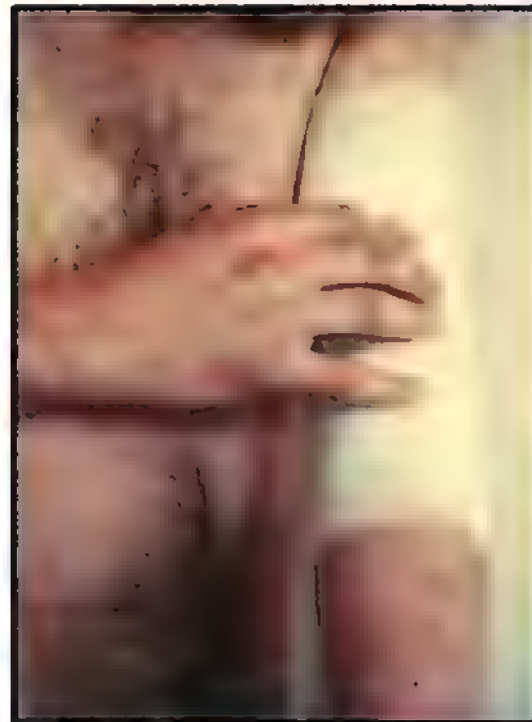
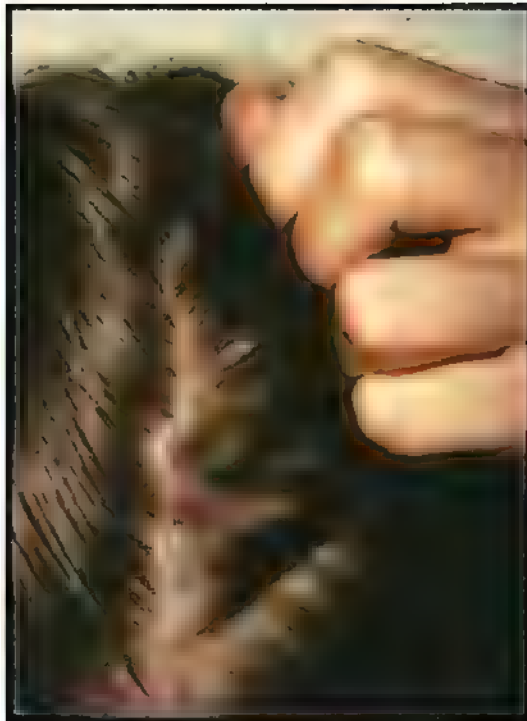
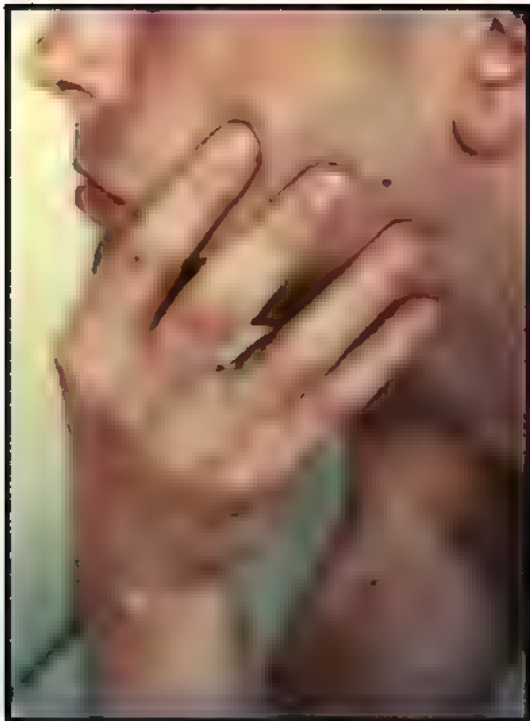


RANDOM ACCESS

BY CHARLES BURNS



RANDOM ACCESS



BY CHARLES BURNS

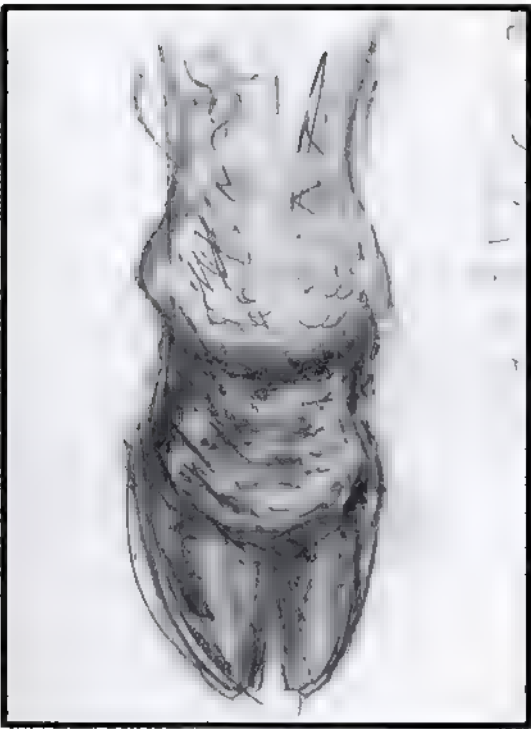


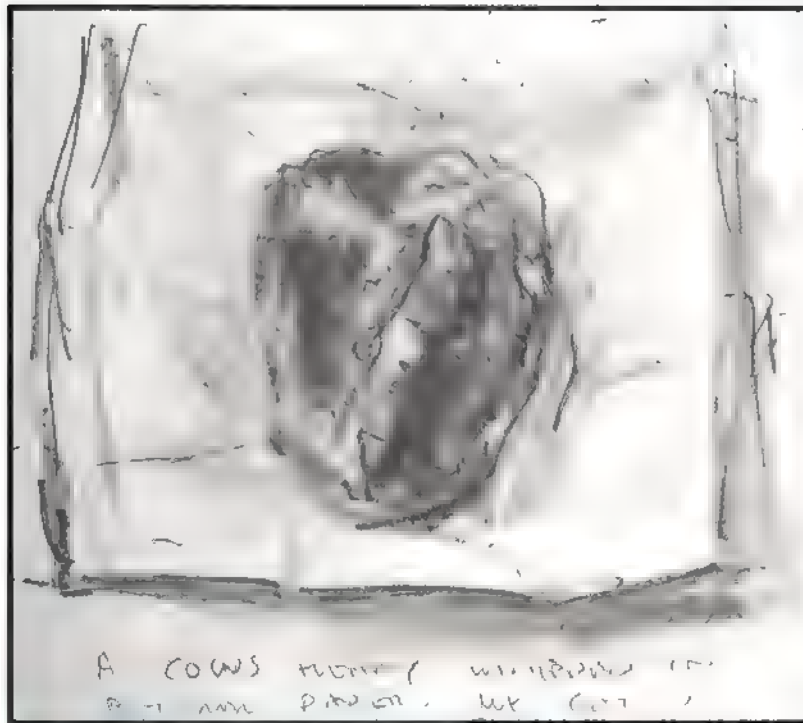
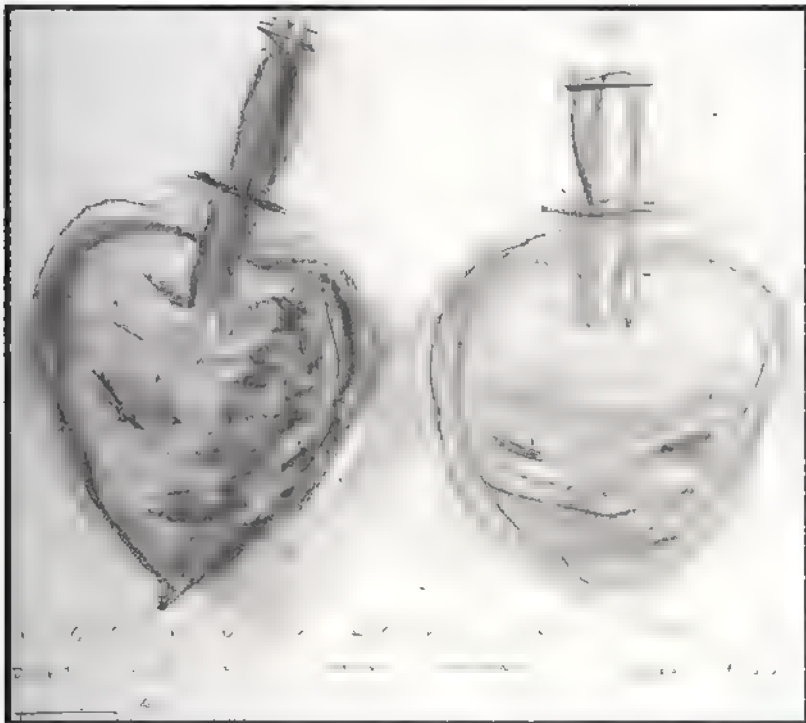
I FIGURED
IF I WAS
GOING TO
BE AN
ARTIST I'D
HAVE TO GO
THROUGH
A LITTLE
PAIN...



EVEN IF
IT WAS
SELF-
INFLICTED.





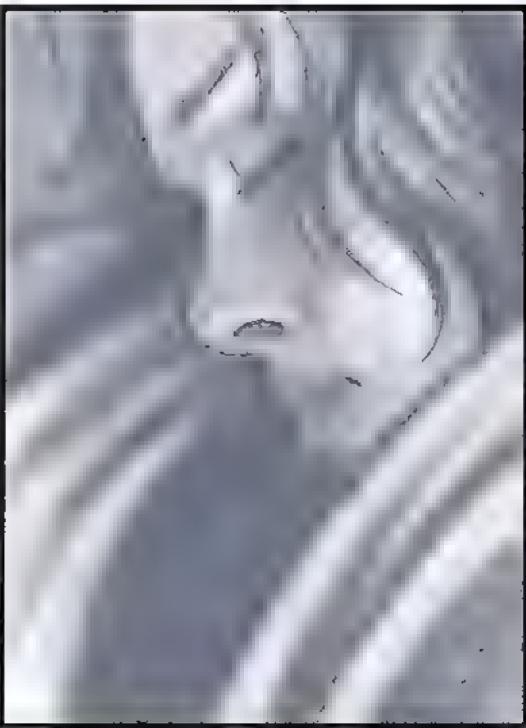


AT SOME
POINT, I
REALIZED
I WAS
STEALING
HER IDEAS.

HER
IMAGES.

HER
ROOM WAS
PAINTED
BLACK...

EVERYTHING,
EVEN THE
FLOORS.



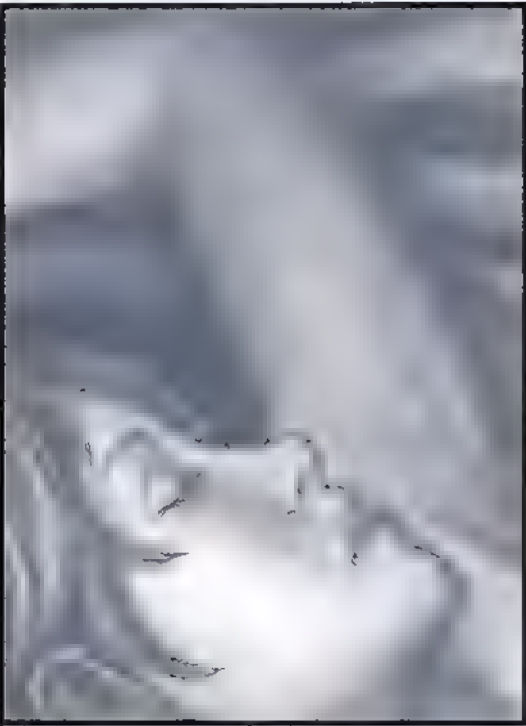
NONE
OF THE
USUAL
CRAP...

NO
FURNITURE,
ARTWORK,
POSTERS,
PHOTOS...

NOTHING.

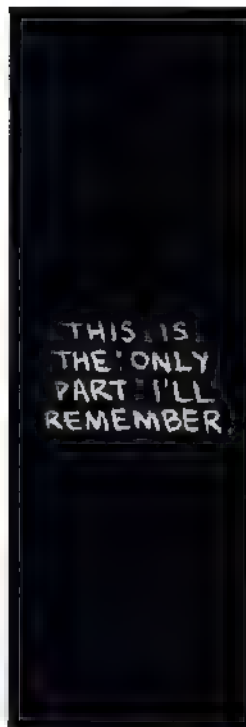
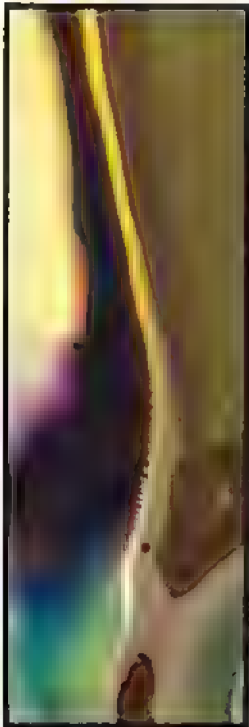


ALL SHE
HAD IN
THERE
WAS A
BED ON
THE FLOOR
COVERED
WITH
BRIGHT
BLUE
SHEETS.

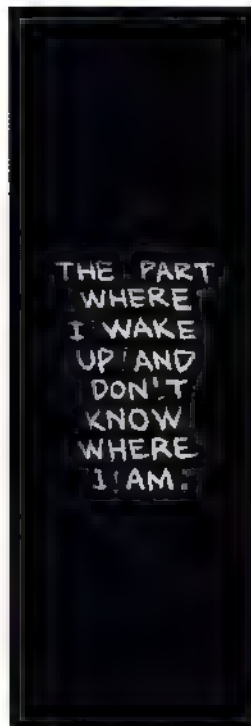
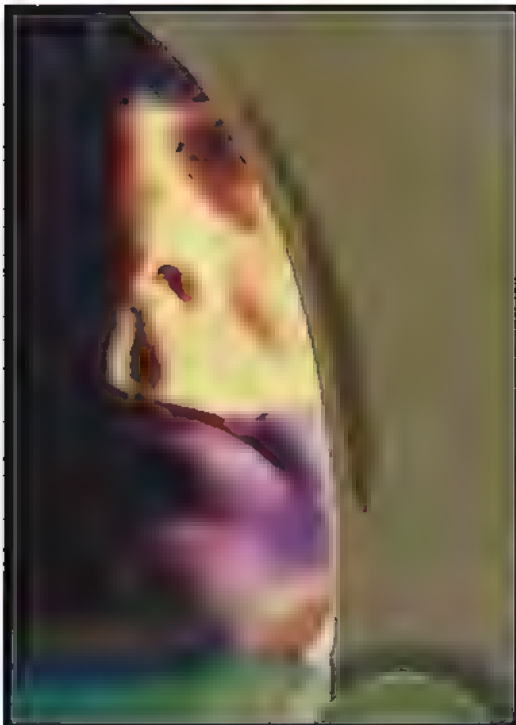


WHEN YOU
WALKED
IN,
THE BED
LOOKED
LIKE IT
WAS
FLOATING
IN
SPACE.

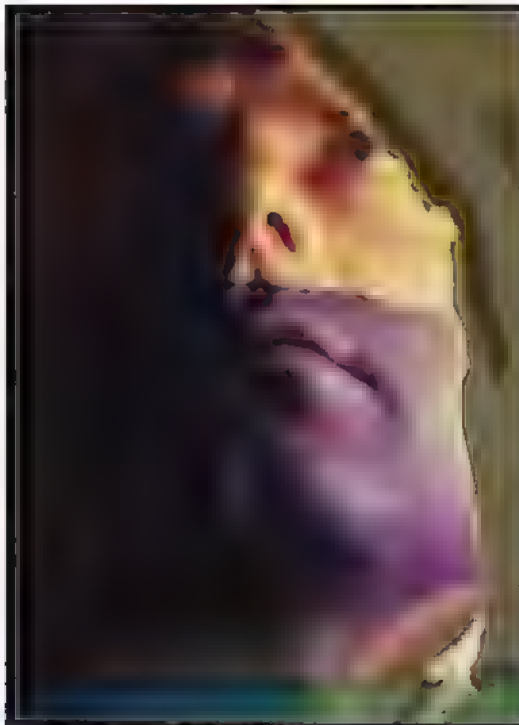


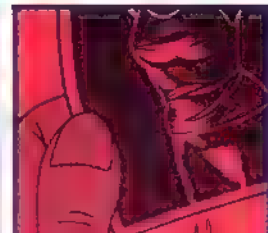
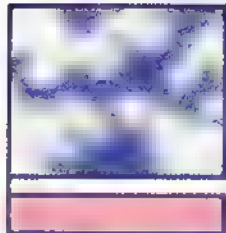


THIS IS
THE ONLY
PART I'LL
REMEMBER



THE PART
WHERE
I WAKE
UP AND
DON'T
KNOW
WHERE
I AM.

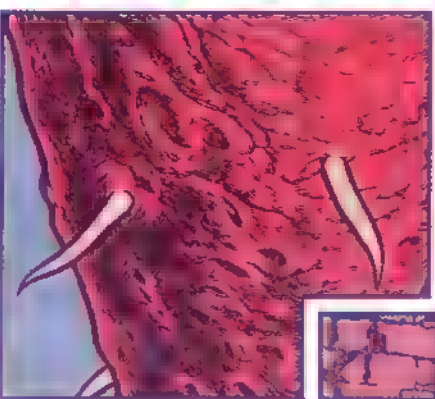
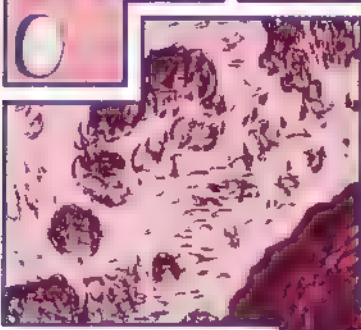




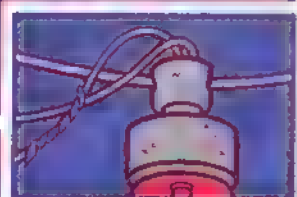
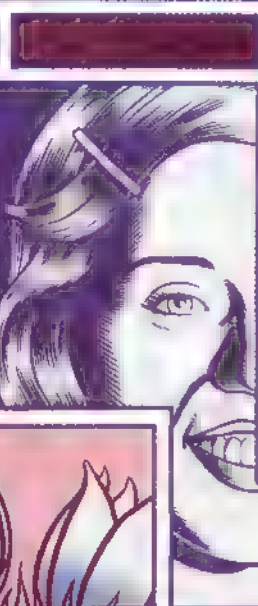
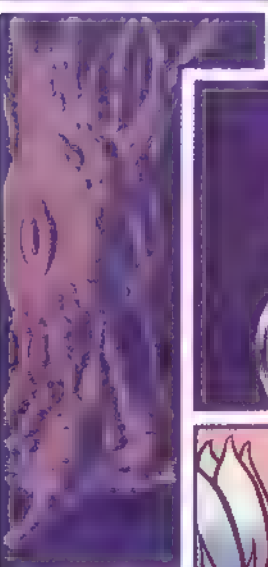
THIS IS WHAT I'M STUCK WITH. A STUTTER, A SKIP, A BLURRED MUTTERING.



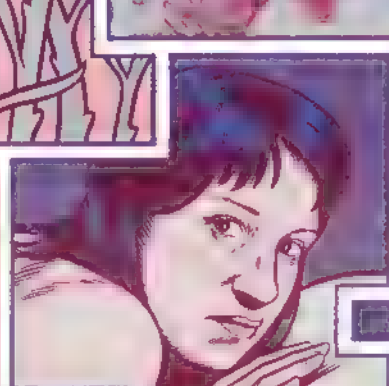
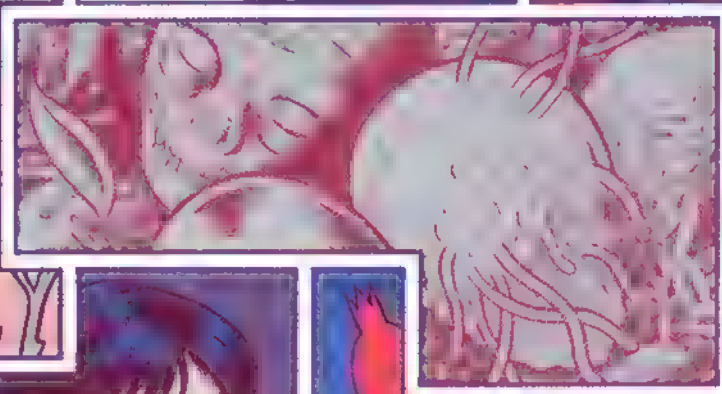
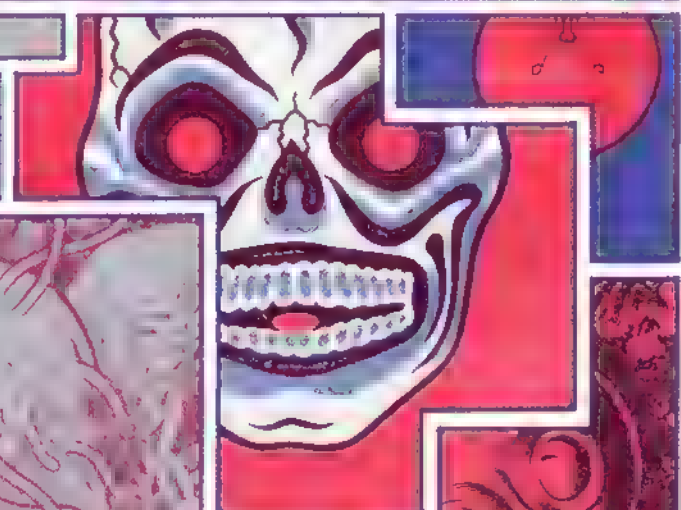
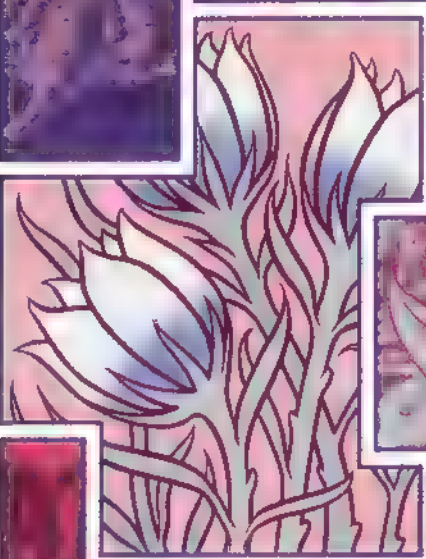
THE SAME WORDS, THE SAME IMAGES, OVER AND OVER AGAIN.



SOMETIMES I FORGET MYSELF. SOMETIMES I FEEL AS THOUGH I'M DISCOVERING THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME.



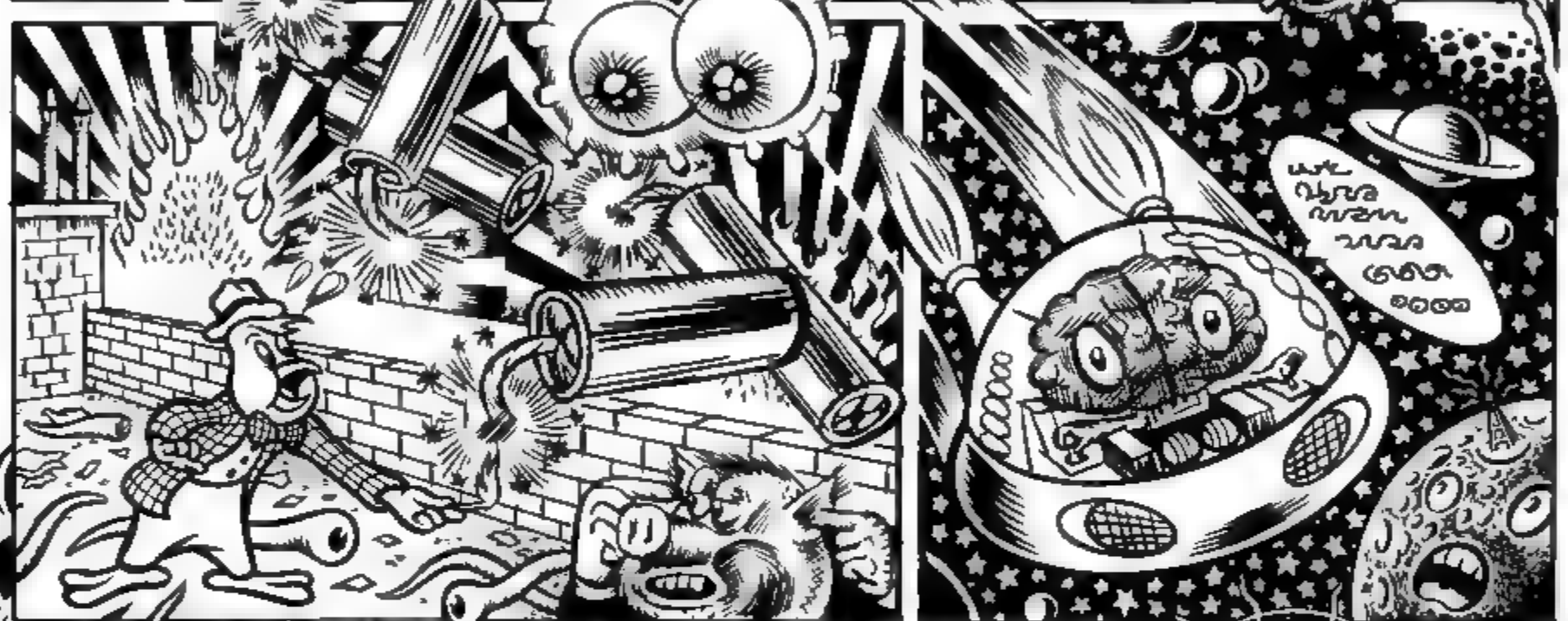
THEY FEEL NEW. THEY COME ALIVE FOR A FEW MOMENTS.



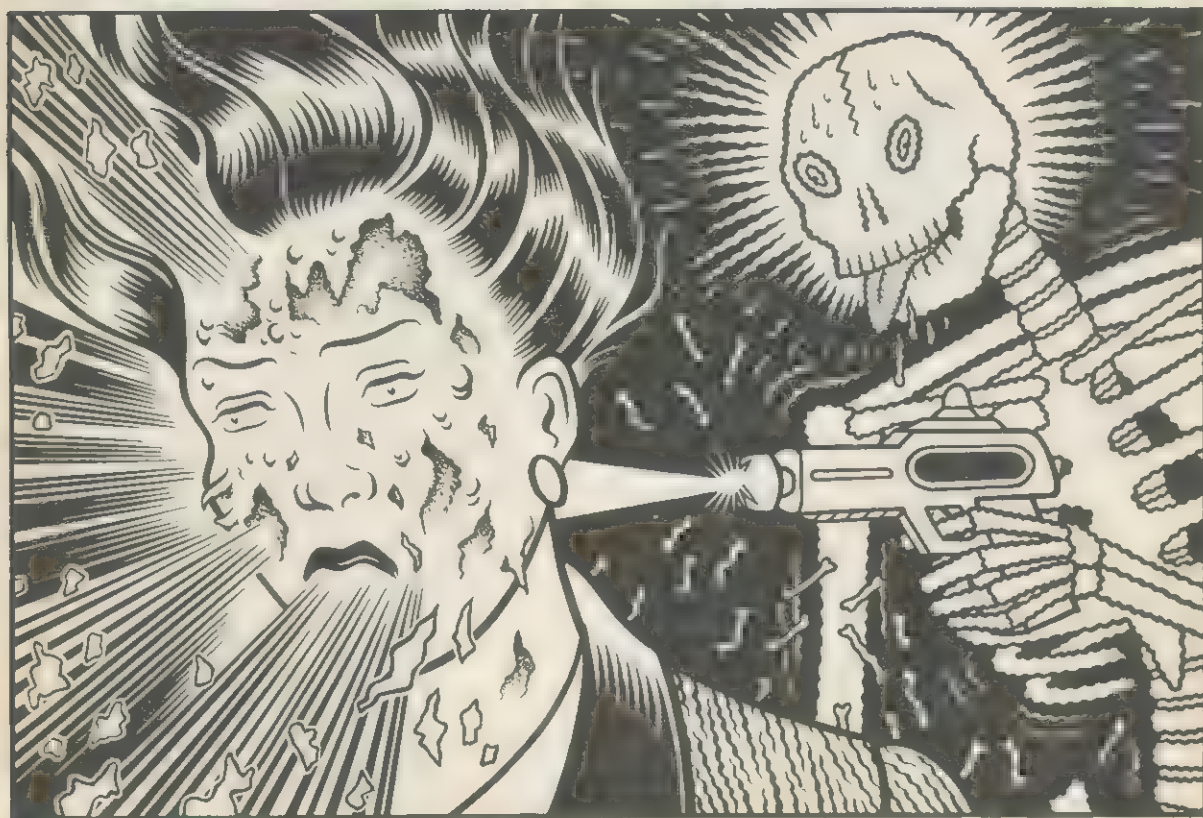
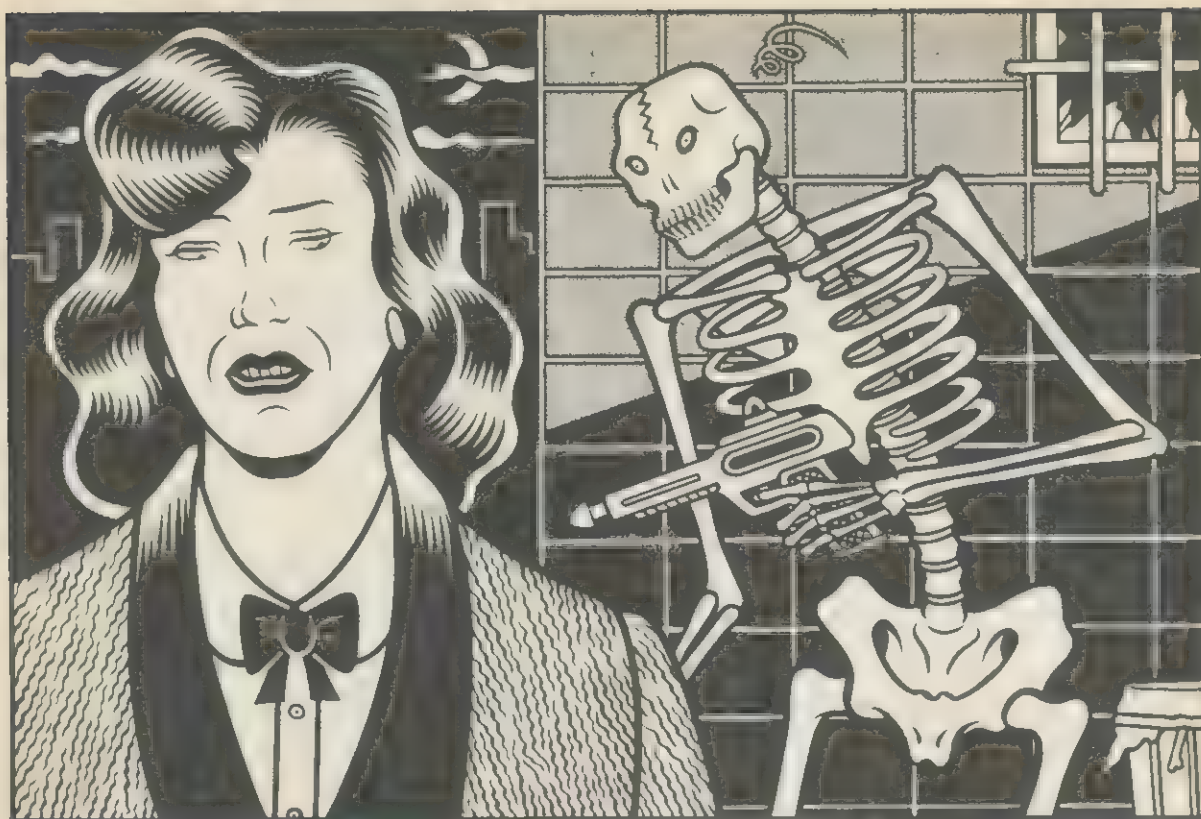
AND AT OTHER TIMES IT'S MORE LIKE A BROKEN RECORD, A TAPE LOOP.

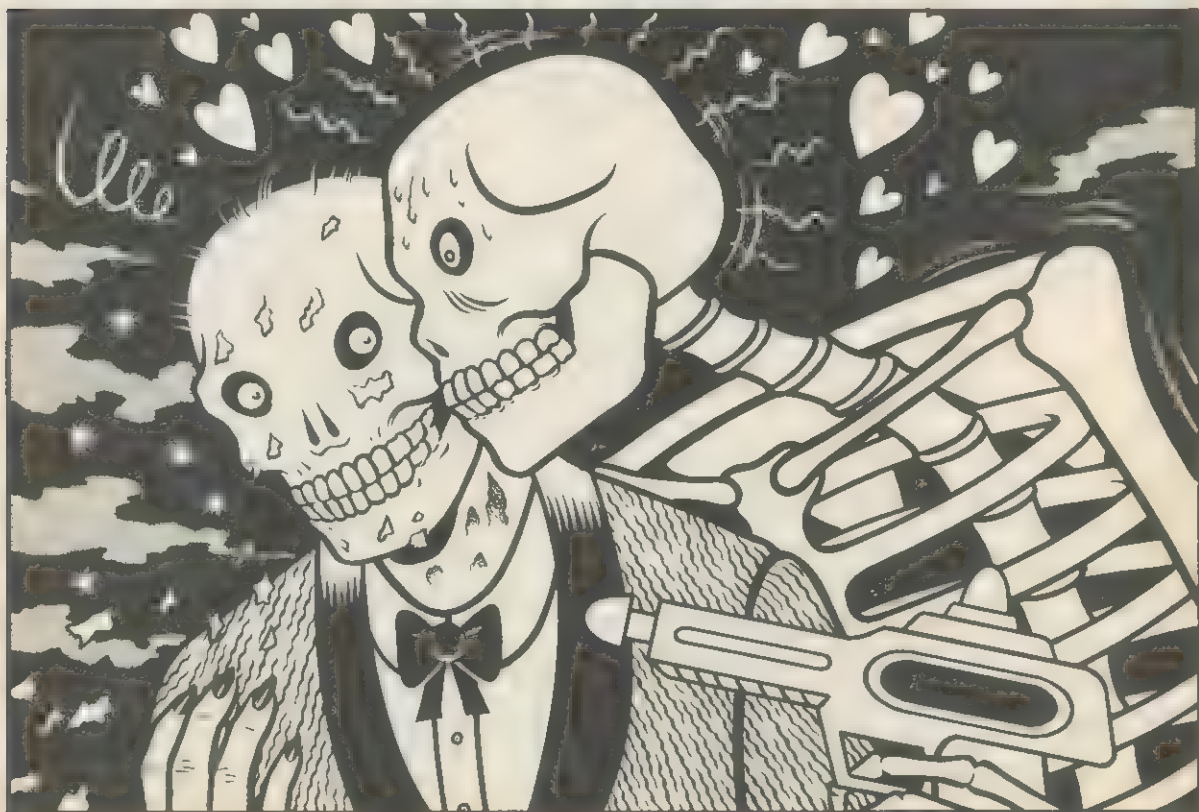


AN ECHO THEY WON'T STOP.









WALKING DOWN A COOL DARK ROAD . SAD
TEENAGERS WHO WON'T STAY DEAD



CREEPY CRAWLING IN THROUGH THE
BACK DOOR LATE AT NIGHT AFTER MOM
AND DAD ARE SAFE IN BED...



THEY STAY A WHILE...MAYBE WATCH T.V.,
MAKE A SANDWICH .ALWAYS LEAVING
SOMETHING A STAIN ON THE SOFA, A
CLUMP OF HAIR, A DECOMPOSED FINGER



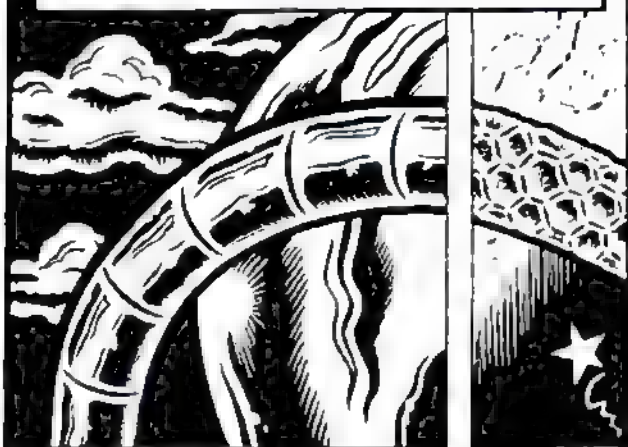
.. AND ALWAYS THAT SAME ODOR - HARD
TO DEFINE .SOMETHING WILD AND
ROTTEN THE SMELL OF SHALLOW GRAVES.



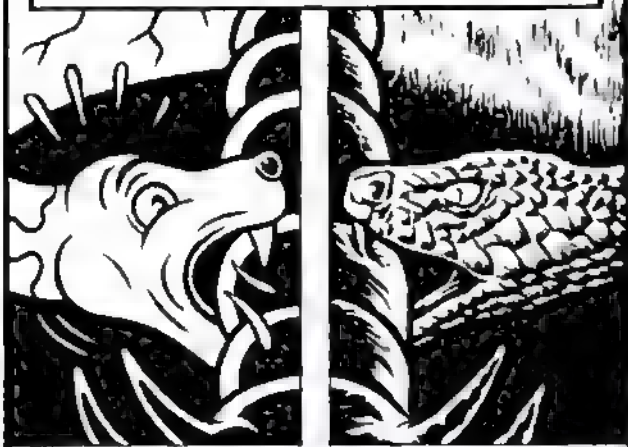
AWW, COME ON
TIMMY... DON'T BE
AFRAID... I'M YOUR
SECRET LITTLE
FRIEND!



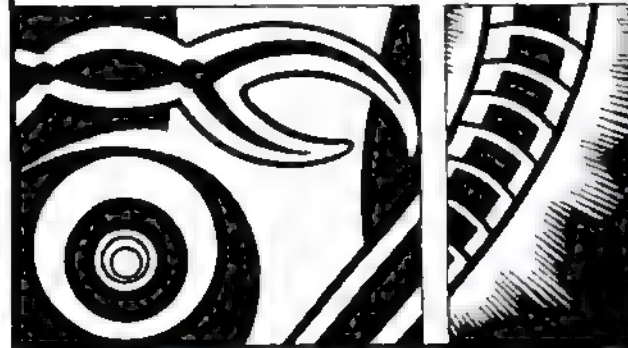
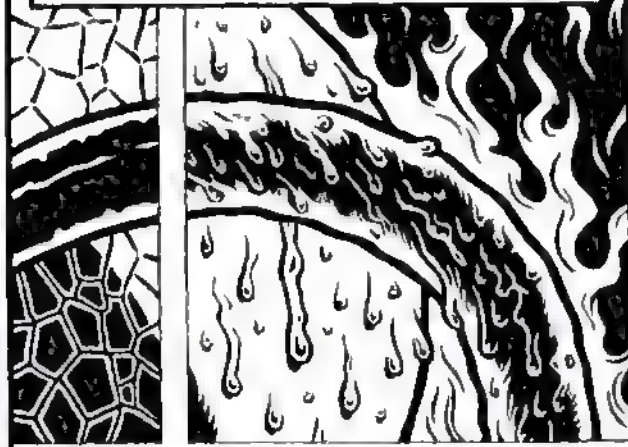
I ALWAYS LIKED COMICS. PAGE AFTER PAGE OF LITTLE BOXES WITH NICE, COLORFUL PICTURES...



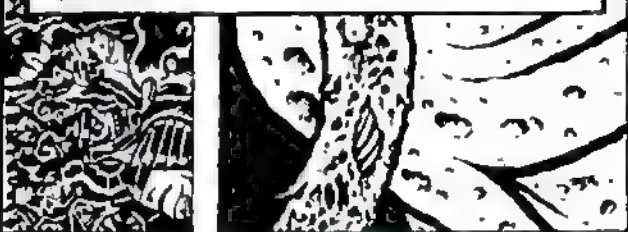
...SIMPLE STORIES TOLD WITH DIALOGUE FILLED BALLOONS, WEIRD SYMBOLS AND DRAMATIC NARRATION...



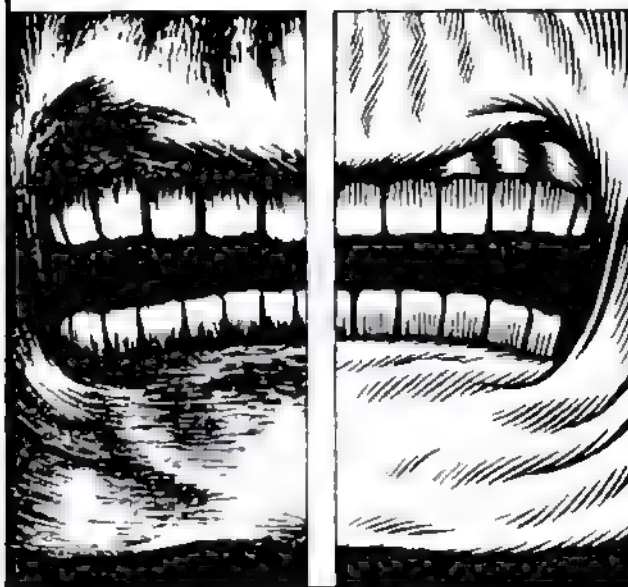
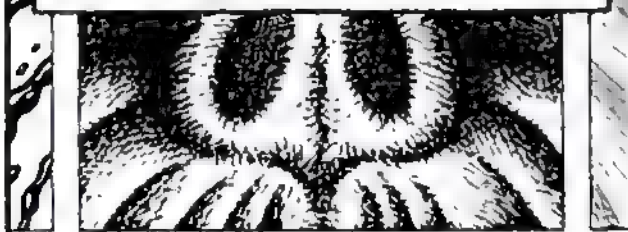
...BUT SOMETIMES I WANTED MORE... I WANTED TO BREAK THROUGH ALL OF THOSE RIGID PANELS...



...TO PIERCE THE SURFACE AND SEE A RICHER, MORE COMPLEX STRUCTURE BELOW...



ANOTHER DIMENSION... SOMETHING DARK AND RIPE THAT THE NAKED EYE WAS NOT MEANT TO BEHOLD...



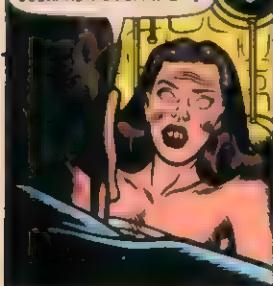
...BUT MOST OF THE TIME I WAS CONTENT JUST TO LOOK AT THE LITTLE BOXES AND NICE PICTURES.



SPOOKY LOVE STORIES

NOW I WAIT... WAIT FOR SUSANNE TO COME TO LIFE! AND SUDDENLY... AS I LOOK DOWN ON HER PEACEFUL FACE...

SUSANNE... SUSANNE...



I LOOK INTO HER EYES THAT SHINE WITH DEATH HER FACE IS EXPRESSIONLESS MUTE AS THOUGH LIFE ITSELF IS A HORROR...

SUSANNE... SPEAK! SAY SOMETHING!



I BACKED AWAY FROM MY WED THE BEING WHO RELEA... SUSANNE'S BEAUTY OVER... ME AND I WAITED LONG... BREATHLESSLY AS SHE TOO SLOW SHUFFLES TOWARD ME... ON...

COME DARLING! OH, COME!



NO... IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT SHE WAS WALKING. IT WAS TO SOMETHING... ELSE IT WAS A CORPSE FETTERED EARTH-CRACKED... WITH ROTTED RED EYES TOWARDS A MAN...

NO!



A DEAD CORPSE WITHOUT A HEART... WHOSE ROTTEN HANDS HELD SUSANNE IN A GESTURE OF LOVE...

IT CAN'T-- BE!!

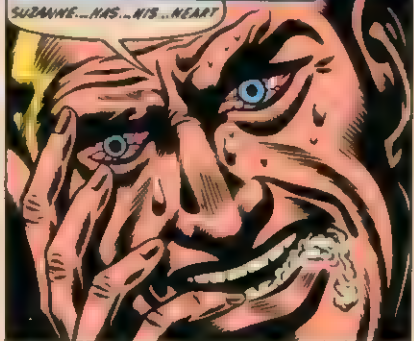


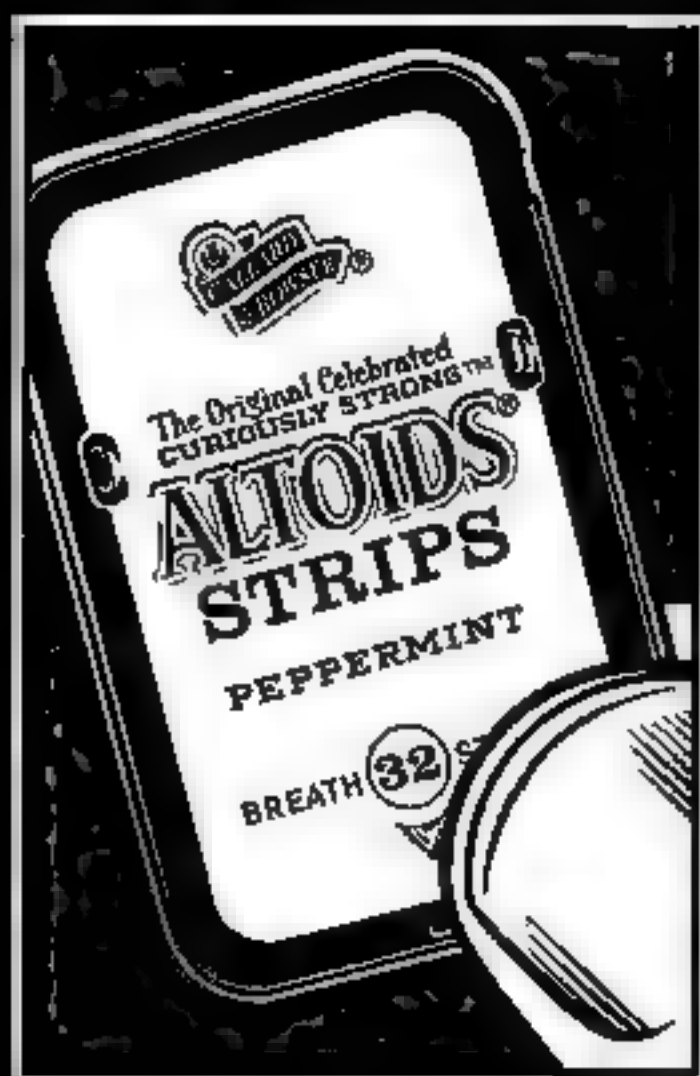
HELPLESS AND HORRIFIED, I SEE TWO DEAD THINGS KISSING... TWO DECAYED THINGS TOUCHING LIPS OF LOVE...



I HEAR A SNAP. IT WAS MY BRAIN. BUT I KNOW WHAT I DID... KNOW WHAT HAPPENED...

SUSANNE... HAS... HIS... HEART





THE CURIOUSLY STRONG STRIPS



PEOPLE... THEY HAVE NO
IDEA WHAT *REAL* PAIN IS.

THEIR TINY LITTLE
MINDS CAN'T *BEGIN*
TO COMPREHEND IT.



FIRST, YOU MUST LEARN
TO *EMBRACE* PAIN, NOT
RUN FROM IT.



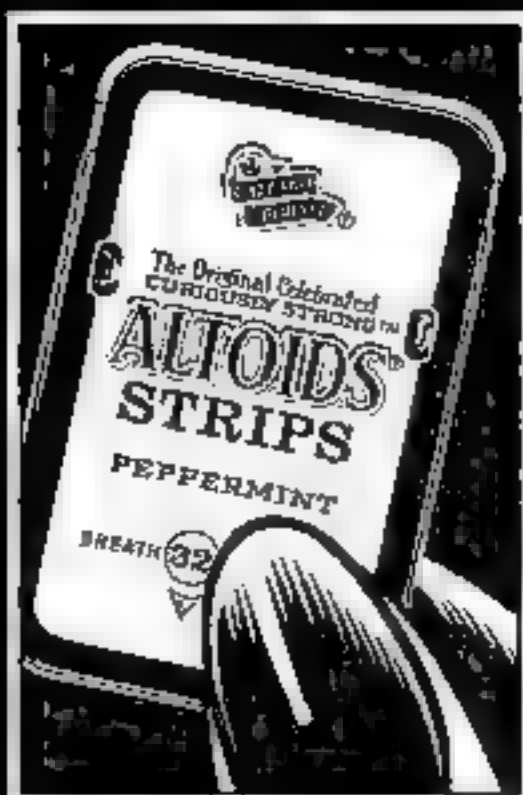
I LIVE IN DARKNESS.



FOR THREE YEARS, I
HAVE YET TO SEE THE
LIGHT OF DAY.



BY LETTING
MYSELF FEEL THIS
PAIN, I'VE FINALLY
GOTTEN TO KNOW
THE REAL ME.



AND THAT MAKES ME
FEEL, WELL...HAPPY?



THE CURIOUSLY STRONG STRIPS



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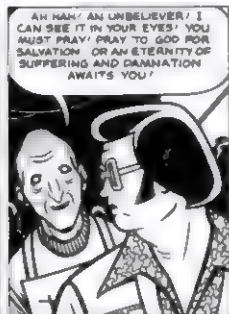
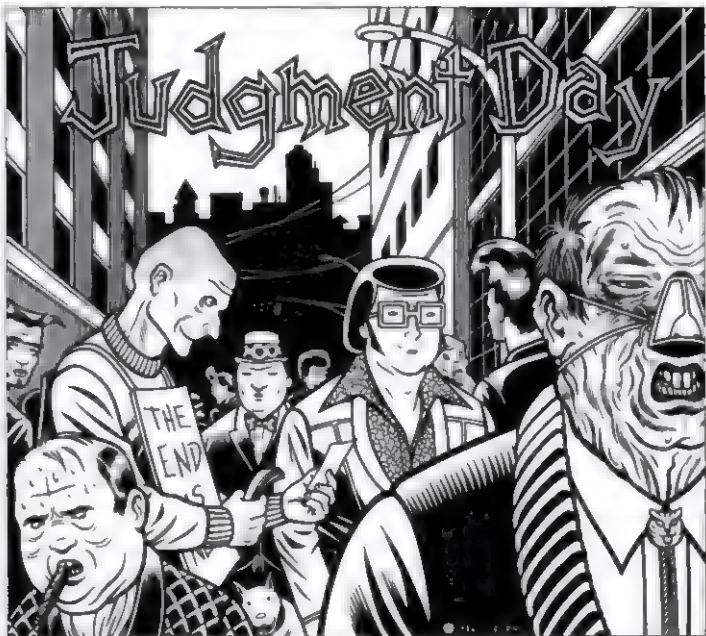


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HALF AN HOUR LATER

DARLING, I'M HOME... SORRY I'M SO LATE BUT WE HAD TROUBLE FILMING THAT ELECTRIC CHAIR SEQUENCE FOR "BITCHES BEHIND BARS."

IT WAS TRICKY, BUT UM... ARE YOU GOING OUT?

DON'T YOU REMEMBER? THIS IS MY NIGHT OUT WITH THE BRIDGE CLUB

BRIDGE CLUB? BOY I FEEL LIKE I NEVER SEE YOU ANYMORE...

OH, YOU'RE BEING SILLY NOW. DON'T WAIT UP, I'LL BE BACK LATE.

HAVE FUN. MONEY DRIVE CAREFULLY

WHA? OH, YEAH, THE PAMPHLET THAT RELIGIOUS NUT GAVE ME...

WOW, THIS IS SOME PRETTY HEAVY STUFF



WHOW! POOR GUY CROAKS THEN GETS HIS LIFE REVIEWED BY GOD AND JUST BECAUSE HE FELL ASLEEP IN CHURCH A FEW TIMES, AND STOLE CANDY BARS WHEN HE WAS A KID, HE WINDS UP FRYIN' IN HELL!

WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THE PERFECT IDEA FOR A GAME SHOW! KIND OF A CROSS BETWEEN "THE MATING GAME" AND "TRUTH OR TORTURE!"

KOOTIE-BUG







AQUÍ SE ACABA EL PRIMER
NÚMERO DE **AGUJERO NEGRO**.
EN VEZ DE USAR ESTE ESPACIO
PARA PUBLICAR SOLO CARTAS,
QUISIERA QUE TODOS, LECTORES,
GUIONISTAS, DIBUJANTES Y DEMÁS,
CONTRIBUYÉRAIS ENVIANDO COSAS
RELACIONADAS CON VUESTRAS
PROPIAS HISTORIAS DE HORROR
DEL INSTITUTO. ¿COMO QUE?
PUES... CON HISTORIAS ROMÁN-
TICAS, DIBUJOS HECHOS EN
PLENO TRIPI, FOTOS, ENTRÁDAS
EN VUESTROS DIARIOS PERSONALES.
LO QUE QUERÁIS. SI ES BUENO,
INTENTARE PUBLICARLO.
PODEIS ENVIAR VUESTRAS
COSAS A:

AGUJERO NEGRO.
EDICIONES LA CÚPULA.
PLAZA BEATAS, 3
08003 BARCELONA.

MIENTRAS TANTO, AQUÍ TENÉIS
ALGUNOS DIBUJOS QUE HICE
CUANDO IBA AL INSTITUTO.

← **CHARLES
BURNS
EN 1973**





